ABSOLUTE EMPEROR

Napoleonic Wargame Battles

Boyd Bruce

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Introduction

I love Napoleonic wargaming. In fact, it is my favorite period. The pageantry, the uniforms, the personalities, the battlefields, the use of combined arms—all of these aspects endear this period to me like no other in wargaming. Since I started miniature wargaming in the late eighties, I have read, learned, and enjoyed dozens of excellent sets of Napoleonic rules. I loved playing them, yet I couldn't help noticing that I always moved on from one set to another without actually understanding fully why. If I enjoyed a set of rules, why didn't I just stick with them and play the game? For me it was the result of one simple flaw. This flaw also keeps the majority of wargamers at arm's length from Napoleonic wargaming: overkill.

So, what is overkill? I want spectacle, I want grand sweep with many miniatures on a big table. What I don't want is to spend three months painting esoteric troops for a single battle. For example, must I paint 10,000 *polcheniye* to fight the battle of Borodino? Traditionally, Napoleonic wargames are built around mechanics with battalion-level units. This is, on the surface, the correct scale, because all the primary sources speak in numbers of battalions. However, it also means the average player would have to paint endlessly, one battalion at a time, for every battalion of a battle. If one ever wanted to play a large historical battle like Waterloo, they would have to buy and paint literally thousands of models…for both sides! Also, don't expect your buddy to paint all the Prussians for you. Even games using brigade-sized units require a full dedication to Napoleonic gaming as your primary wargaming interest. And because space is limited for most people, only a portion of a battle can ever be played using these scales. It is a rare gamer who can find space and time to put together and play even a moderately-sized battle like Jena. The best part of an old-fashioned Napoleonic game is the masses of units on a massive table. The downside is spending three hours to set up, eighteen hours of playing without conclusion, and three hours to clear everything away. It makes the game more work than play, and that is the overkill.

I know. That last paragraph just takes the wind right out of your sails. But do not despair. *Absolute Emperor* is designed for the busy, multiple-time-

period enthusiast who wants a good Austerlitz in the morning, a cup of tea in the afternoon, then perhaps some football on the TV that evening. A perfect Saturday.

Ranks and flanks are what musket era gaming is all about. A player needs troops painted and ready for battle; based upon the recent popularity of inexpensive plastic figures, one can imagine building and painting around fifty to one hundred figures total for an army. With modern painting techniques, that is a reasonable number of figures—and not so many that aging will interfere with completing the task. I believe that the game scale and mechanics in *Absolute Emperor* allows players to have a reasonable number of models for a reasonable representation, with the flavor of the period, and enough maneuver units to give the feel of proper difficulties with command and control at the highest levels. High-level command feel is the core reason I wrote *Absolute Emperor*. As the army commander, you should be able to see where and what a division is doing, but you shouldn't be involved with the disposition of battalions and guns.

In this rules set I have taken my years of experience with historical and tournament wargaming, cobbled some ideas together, spoken to random people, was told about an article on the Internet, and developed a way for gamers to paint up a reasonable number of troops and still be able to play a sizable battle in two to three hours. I have included a method for gamers to create battles of their own design, "what if" scenarios, or simply battle with what they have painted already. I have, of course, also included traditional historical scenarios of large important battles: Waterloo, Eylau, and Wagram—all of which can be easily completed in an evening.

To play this game you will need six-sided dice (d6), a ruler or measuring tape marked in inches (”), some eight-sided dice (d8) or other casualty counting system, some miniatures based to a wargame standard, and a playing surface four by six foot or larger.

This rules set is designed to encourage Napoleonic Wargaming with minimum rules anxiety and maximum period feel. The design impetus is to allow people to finish a sizable game in few hours. I like history, I like to write rules, and I like to roll dice. Please enjoy the rules in that spirit.

General de Rationale

Throughout this book, you will find dialogue paragraphs wherein I explain why a certain rule or convention is the way it is. Narration is by my alter

ego, General de Rationale. He will help new gamers understand how the period feel of Napoleonic wargaming is expressed in game terms, and he will help old guard gamers know why it may seem different than what they are used to on the surface.

Theoretical Conventions

In every nation, and even within each nation, our modern ideas of uniformity would be foreign during the Napoleonic era. Regiments, battalions, demi-brigades, brigades, divisions, columns, corps, and armies all had varied meanings with regard to number of troops, organization of troops, and logistics train. In other words, one cannot generalize the militaries of the European nations during the first half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, I have done just that. I will refer to "units" and "divisions" interchangeably. It is the general relationships between forces, rather than the number of battalions and squadrons, that I strive to represent. I believe it is the feel of the period command, rather than the lower level details, that dictates an enjoyable game. What I have done is design the game's command structures for all nationalities to be similar in the basic game. Then in the advanced rules section I have given each nationality an identity with troop composition, type, and formation.

One of the areas in which traditional Napoleonic wargaming has struggled is in the desire to recreate the details of command and control during the period. I encourage gamers to read about and understand these fascinating details of battlefield communications in a time when the battle was often larger than the commander could view from one vantage point. Yet the need to communicate quickly with subordinates without radios, semaphore towers, or even pigeons meant a courier on horseback was the fastest option. However, for game playability, this is one giant black hole of time wasting—sending single models with scribbled notes here and there measuring time arbitrarily out of scale. Thus, as you will see in the Élan section of the rules, I have incorporated a way to communicate through the same mechanic we use for morale and acumen. So, to insist on urgency is to lose potential future effectiveness. This, I believe, is a fundamental aspect of Napoleonic command and control, and therefore the one I have focused on here. As the commander focuses his attention more narrowly on a point of battle, his ability to influence the larger battle is reduced. Anyone who

plays the Russian army in the Eylau scenario in the back will quickly note the struggle for command.

One might note immediately that skirmishers are factored into the Shooting Phase rather than represented on the table. I too love the spectacle of a skirmish line preceding French columns, like something Dino De Laurentiis might produce in a movie from the seventies. However, at this level, every way I have tried to represent skirmishing bodies just muddied the game and extended turn length. So, they are factored into the Shooting Phase.

French reinforcements march to occupy a village somewhere in Russia.

An aspect of the period that adds to the visual spectacle, and attracts many gamers is the brilliance of the uniforms. An evolution from the preceding age in uniformity, but not so uniform as to lose distinction between types of units. It is important to maintain the flashes of color and brilliance more than the exact breakdown of plumes, sashes, buttons, and such. If a gamer is building an army, say 1812 Russians, and he has a division rated as Veteran, it makes sense that he uses Russian Grenadier figures in the front rank to represent the overall stalwart nature of the division. Grenadiers may only represent a portion of the division in reality, but it adds to the visual appeal and makes special troops readily identifiable. I strongly recommend that gamers express themselves by including

pageantry as much as possible. A division of cavalry, for example, will have many different regiments; it need not be completely uniform. If a Light Cavalry division is represented, include some hussars, chasseurs and perhaps lancers. Uniformity is needed, but flashes of color add to the scale representatively.

A Note on Units and Scale

I realize that there were no standard unit names or sizes during the period other than "battalion". I also note that not all armies used divisions or corps as a command level, and indeed the term "army" could be just about any combination of units depending on nationality and/or year. For game purposes, I have adapted and adopted the words "Division" and "Corps" to represent, in the abstract, basic game units. A division in this game is approximately 5000 infantry or 3000 cavalry. A corps is a collection of these divisions under the command of a corps commander. Divisions work only as part of a corps, based upon the corps' orders. Artillery units in the game represent approximately twenty-five to fifty guns (depending upon caliber); the "artillery reserve" or brigade, corps, and army level guns. Smaller batteries associated with battalions are factored into the infantry or cavalry units.

Another abstraction is that models and a unit's footprint represent approximate locations and deployments in relation to other units. For example, an infantry division actually represents three or four brigades, of three to six battalions each, arranged for attack, defense or marching. That is all you, the army commander care about formations. For visual affect, I have created proxy formations, and they vaguely resemble what one might think a battalion would look like in the given formation. This is just for the gamer's benefit and pleasure, as again visual spectacle is an important part of Napoleonic period wargaming in my opinion.

This game is designed to use miniatures ranging from 6mm to 28mm. It can be used in other scales/sizes with some adjustments to ranges. In 28mm I use 4" as the interaction area between maneuver units (divisions); consider this zone between divisions the area in which battalions and battalion guns are deployed from the parent division to conduct skirmishing and small battery firing operations. For smaller scales, cut this interaction zone to 2". However, some may want to adjust scales for larger or smaller tables, and I am all for making things work for you. Like the units themselves, my

scaling allows units to interact in a period fashion. The abstraction allows, at the highest levels of command, concern for where and what divisions are doing, not how they are doing it.

The following list gives the movement, charge and fire ranges, as well as the interaction zone:

Miniature Size Conversion Table					
Figure Size	**Infantry Movement Line/Attack Column/ March Column**	**Cavalry Movement Line/Squadrons/ March Column**	**Charge Movement Infantry/Cavalry**	**Interaction Zone**	**Artillery Canister/ Effective range**
10/15mm	2/3/4″	4/4/8″	2/4″	2″	4/12″
25/28mm	4/6/8″	8/8/16″	4/8″	4″	6/18″
54mm	8/10/16″	16/16/32″	8/16″	8″	12/36″

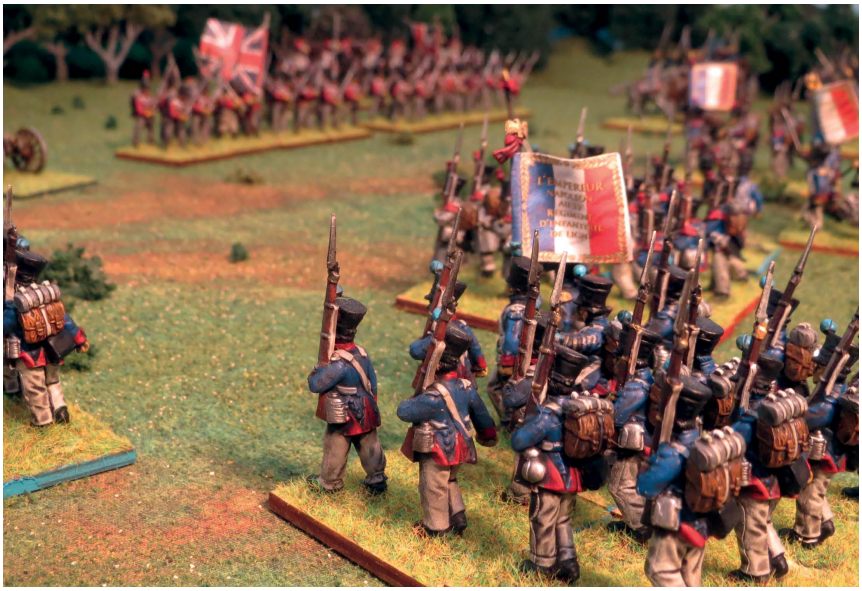
General de Rationale

While old guard gamers may baulk at what seems an intractable obstacle of scale when looking at the "interaction area", it must be remembered that a significant part of infantry combat during this period took place prior to the bayonet charge or even the close ordered ranks of men blasting away at each other from only a few yards away. This area is where battalion guns, skirmishers, and battalion detachments seek to clear the area of enemy skirmishers or seize some important tactical advantage that, at this scale, is unimportant otherwise. For new and old gamers alike, just know that this interaction area is full of soldiers fighting and dying apart from the main body of the division.

Basing Units

Right out of the box, traditional gamers ask: “What about rebasing?” **Don’t rebase your troops.**

This game system has been designed with 28mm figures in mind. It also works well with 15mm, 10mm, 6mm, and even 2mm, by simply reducing all ranges given by half. To play using 54mm figures, I suggest doubling all ranges. Any basing scheme is fine, as long as both players are able to visualize what constitutes a single “division” for playing purposes. Ideally, a unit will have the same size bases for all troops, but this isn’t critical. The most important aspect is frontage of units, rather than number of bases or figures.



French Columns advance toward the awaiting British line.

Bases vary in Napoleonic gaming more than any other genre, so fixating on base size has always been a stumbling block for players. It is often difficult to transition from one set of rules to another as a result. In the past, some games have attempted to allow different standards to be used, but not together on the same table. I want anyone to be able to play anyone with figures in the same scale. So, your bases will work fine as long as the scale of troops and the ranges given remain constant. The rule of thumb for

25mm and 28mm troops is 6” (with the prevalence of 40mm bases, four bases is 160mm, or approximately 6 1/3”) frontage for infantry units in Line, 8” (200mm) frontage for cavalry units in Line, and 2” (50mm) for artillery batteries. Use whatever number of bases within those frontages that works best for you, and if it is off a few millimeters it doesn’t really matter, as long as both sides know. Depth is up to you, as some people have thousands of figures and can field many ranks, while others have few and can go only one base deep. Either way, as long as the frontage is similar on both sides, players will be able to play Absolute Emperor with no difficulty.

My standard basing for 28mm troops is 40mm square bases for infantry and officers, 50mm square for cavalry and artillery. I base my infantry 4 figures in two rows of 2. Cavalry are based 2 figures side by side, and officers are based one figure per base. Artillery is based as a single gun model with two artillerymen.

Core Concepts

The format is set up with specific rules pertaining to formations, movement rates, shooting and combat capabilities listed under the individual unit types. General rules are listed in the appropriately named sections in order of play. However, if there seems a conflict in rules, always assume the specific unit rules take precedence over the general.

Sequence of Play

Within each phase, all actions are simultaneous; both sides conduct all movement, then all shooting, then all charging, and all combat. As noted below, there is a sequence of play that allows for all things to happen in an orderly fashion, but one side is never disadvantaged in shooting or combat as they would be in an "I go you go" type of system.

A game turn is divided into five Phases:

1. Command
2. Movement
3. Shooting
4. Charges
5. Combat

Once all five Phases are complete, the game proceeds to the next turn taking each Phase in order again, and so on until the game is concluded through élan attrition or a predetermined number of turns has elapsed.

Turn Initiative

While each action Phase is simultaneous, one side must actually initiate each Phase. Both sides count up their total élan in the Command Phase. The player with the lower élan will have the initiative, acting first in each Phase, allowing the side with higher élan to view their plans and tactical movements. All actions in the Shooting, Charging, and Combat Phases then proceed from left to right or right to left across the table from the perspective and preference of the person with the higher élan. It must always be remembered that each Phase is simultaneous for both sides, so

results received in the Shooting Phase, for example, will not affect the unit until the end of the Phase.

Activation

Whenever a unit has to make a contested charge, countercharge, form emergency square, or take a waver test, make an activation roll using 1d6. The target number is based upon the type of unit: a Conscript unit succeeds on 5+, Seasoned on 4+, and Veteran on 3+. The number needed for activation is also the number a unit needs to roll in order to score a “hit” on an enemy unit in both the Shooting and Combat Phases of the game.

Types of Unit

In this section are the types of units, the variations of the types, and the specific rules for movement, shooting, and combat for each. The base maneuver units in this game are the divisions of infantry and cavalry, and massed batteries of artillery.

Infantry Types and Formations

As a general rule, all infantry movement is based upon formation and terrain. All infantry units charge 4” and shoot at a range of 4”. Unless the unit is a detachment or oversized, as noted in a scenario or the advanced rules section, all infantry divisions have a frontage in accordance with the basing section above.

The French Cavalry corps consisting of a division of line and a division of light cavalry move to intercept the British light cavalry division.

Infantry Types

- Conscript Infantry are those for whom battle (shooting and maneuvering) are new, or those units that are reluctant allies. In either case, they are not always as capable or willing to act upon orders and often require more effort from their officers to make them effective in battle. Conscripts must always roll activation if ordered to charge. Failing the activation means failing to charge.
- Seasoned Infantry are those for whom battle is known. They know themselves and their officers and feel capable even in the stress of battle. They will always carry out orders, but also know their limits; they act as a competent unit with marginal personal bravery.
- Veteran Infantry consider themselves, and are considered by their peers, elite. They have accomplished deeds against odds in the past and feel confident in their personal bravery as well as their leaders.

Infantry Formations

Infantry can form into the following formations: **Line**, **Attack Column**, **March Order**, **Deployed**, and **Square**. These formations loosely represent the basic methods infantry used to deploy and maneuver.

- **Line:** Line is represented by all bases in the unit side by side in one rank. How these troops are deployed is representative of a division set up for defensive posture or to maximize firepower. Infantry in Line move 4” in open, 2“ in cover and are not allowed a road bonus. Line allows for maximum shooting, with all bases firing from the front rank. Line cannot be used in difficult ground. Line rolls 4d6 in Fire and Combat.
- **Attack Column:** An Attack Column has half its bases in front and half behind (if using 4 bases per divisions it would form a 2x2 square with all the figures facing forwards). Associated mainly with the French early on, then other nationalities later in the war, this formation is a mixture of Line and March Order

with some benefits of both. This formation moves 6” in open, 4” in cover, 2” in difficult ground, and receives no road bonus. Attack Columns use 2d6 in Shooting and Combat.

- **March Order:** Mainly associated with movement along roads, this is the weakest formation for combat. All bases are arranged in one single file, one behind the other, with a single base in the front row. A unit in March Order fights with only a single die regardless of other factors. This formation can move 8” in open and cover, 4” in difficult ground, and 12” if entirely along a road. A unit in March Order cannot intentionally go closer to an enemy unit than 12”. Units in March Order only roll 1d6 in Shooting and Combat, and ignore all modifiers that add or remove dice.
- **Deployed:** Infantry that move into a town or village (we call these Built Up Areas, or BUA) can chose to deploy in that BUA section. To represent a Deployed unit, simply spread the bases of the unit around the section. Deployed units cannot move, except to change into March Order to move out of the BUA. If they recoil in combat, they form a disordered Attack Column behind the BUA section they just vacated. Each engaged side of Deployed units uses 2d6 in Shooting and Combat.
- **Square:** This formation represents several battalions and/or regimental squares within the division’s footprint. A Square has half its bases in front and half behind (if using 4 bases per division it would form a 2x2 square with each base facing to a different side, this helps distinguish it from an Attack Column). Infantry that have not shot, even those that moved, may voluntarily form Square in the Shooting Phase. If they have shot, they must roll activation in order to form an emergency Square when a cavalry unit charges them; if they fail the activation they remain in the current formation and become disordered. A unit in Square cannot move except to change formation (see **here**). Units in Square may not fire. Each engaged side rolls 3d6 in Combat with Cavalry, 1d6 against Infantry. Like other units, an unengaged square has a interaction zone of 4” all-around. However, once a square is

engaged in combat on at least one side, the unengaged sides reduce their interaction zones to 1”.

Cavalry Types and Formations

All cavalry movement is based upon formation and terrain. All cavalry charges are 8”. The basic cavalry unit is a division made up of a number of squadrons. All basing is in accordance with the basing section on **here**. In some scenarios, the number of bases for a division may have more or fewer bases due to extraordinary units or happenstance.

The charge of the Russian Imperial Guard by Christa Hook © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 101: *Austerlitz 1805*

Cavalry Types

There are three types of cavalry in the basic game: **Light**, **Line**, and **Heavy**. A division is given its type based on the majority of the type of troops within the Division (if most of the squadrons are dragoons, with some hussars, then it should be designated a Line division).Each type of cavalry has a battlefield role, and operates in much the same fashion. Like infantry, cavalry can be **Conscript**, **Seasoned**, and **Veteran**. Cavalry do not fight in the Shooting Phase.

- **Light Cavalry**: Primarily used for scouting purposes and turning flanks, light cavalry engages the enemy’s light cavalry,

looking for enemy concentrations, and seeking to screen their own forces. Typical Light Cavalry are hussars, chasseurs à cheval, and light dragoons. For our game purposes, Light Cavalry differ from Line Cavalry in that they receive no charge bonus when facing other cavalry types in combat.

- **Line Cavalry**: Line cavalry trained and used on the battlefield mainly to support infantry attacks and look for opportunity charges. Typical Line Cavalry are dragoons and uhlans. While they may be used in scouting roles at times, they make up the bulk of cavalry used in battle. Line Cavalry follow all the standard combat rules, except they receive no charge bonus when facing Heavy Cavalry in a charge.
- **Heavy Cavalry**: Large men on large horses, the Heavies are the principle shock cavalry in battle. While fewer in number, they see themselves, and are seen by others, as elite troops. Heavy Cavalry always reroll one unsuccessful hit roll on the charge.

Cavalry Formations

Cavalry can form into three formations: **Line**, **Squadrons**, and **March Order**.

- **Line**: A unit in Line formation is arrayed with all bases aligned side-by-side in one rank. Cavalry in Line moves 8” in open ground and 2” in difficult ground. A cavalry unit in Line cannot enter cover. They receive no road bonus. Line formation maximizes the number of dice rolled in combat, but the larger footprint makes it difficult to maneuver in tight terrain. Line rolls 4d6 in Combat.
- **Squadrons**: In Squadrons, cavalry are formed into two lines, one behind the other, with half the bases in the front, half in the rear. This makes for a much more flexible formation, but with less hitting power. Squadron cavalry can move 8” in open ground, 4” in difficult ground, and 2” in cover. Squadrons use 2d6 in Combat.
- **March Order**: All bases are aligned in single file, one behind the other, with a single base in the front row. Cavalry in March Order move 12” in open, 8” in difficult ground, 4” through cover,

and 18” if entirely along a roadway. Cavalry cannot charge in March Order and must evade if charged. Cavalry can only enter fortifications, villages, or towns (BUA) in March Order. Units in March Order roll 1d6 in combat, and ignore all modifiers that add or remove dice.

Artillery Types and Formations

There is only one type of artillery in the basic rules: **Field Artillery**. All howitzers, cannons, guns of all type are lumped into a single category of field artillery, because in the vast majority of battles all artillery batteries had essentially the exact same effect and capability. A single gun model represents a battery of around fifty guns of varying caliber. I make a distinction for horse artillery in the advanced rules.

There are no Veteran, Seasoned, or Conscript artillery in the basic game; the to-hit roll number for artillery is always 5+. Short (canister) range is 6” and effective (ball) range is out to 18”. Artillery rolls 2d6 when firing, counting both dice for hits at short range, but only the highest die at effective range. Artillery rolls 1 die in Combat, and is eliminated if it takes any hits from the melee.

Limbered artillery can move 6” over open ground, 12” along a road—to keep pace with infantry in March Order. An artillery model can do two things per turn, but it can only shoot once per turn. The move combinations allowed are: limber and move, move and move again, move and unlimber, unlimber and shoot, or only shoot. Artillery can always pivot in place without penalty during the Movement Phase, but there is no pivoting allowed in the Shooting, Charging, or Combat Phase.

French cuirassiers slam into a British square at Waterloo.

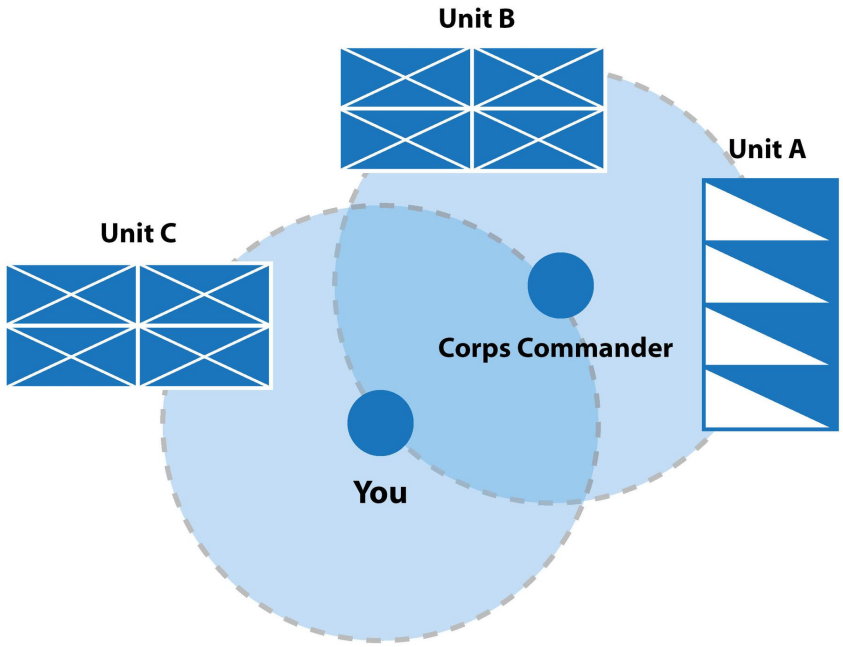
Unless forbidden by nationality or scenario rules, artillery units can always combine into grand batteries of three artillery units. Once joined (side by side), they remain so for the remainder of the game. A grand battery essentially becomes a single unit, not three. When shooting, a grand battery rolls 6d6 and hits on 4+, using the same rules for range as other artillery; thus, at canister range, all six dice are counted, while at effective range, only the highest three. They also count as a single unit for combat purposes (1d6 per gun in combat, and 1 hit per model for resolution purposes). Only one grand battery may be used in a game, and only if there are enough batteries to do so. Batteries are reallocated by the overall commander from one corps to another through an activation roll.

General de Rationale

At the scale of Absolute Emperor*, the only cannon batteries that constitute independent units are what were commonly called "reserve batteries". Historically these were unattached batteries of guns held under the direct control of the general in charge. Often these were the bigger guns; or the best artillery units, such as the French Guard artillery. Smaller batteries, at the battalion and brigade level, are factored into the combat effectiveness of the division; such batteries were used mainly in support of the infantry or cavalry division they were attached to.*

Command and Control

You are the overall commander in the game. Your goal is to see the job done and the enemy dispatched. To that end, the Commander model represents the center of the army, from which all Corps commanders are either “in command” or not. One commander model, with a vignette of two or three figures, represents you on the battlefield. You have a command range of 36” and should keep all Corps Commanders within that range unless they are on a flank march. You have no élan and are under no orders.



Here is an example of the chain of command. The Corps Commander is within the command range of the Army Commander. Units A and B are within the command radius of the Corps Commander, thus are in command. Unit C is out of command radius of the Corps Commander, but since the Army Commander is within eight inches, Unit C is considered still in command.

Corps Commanders must remain in your command radius in order to use their élan. Divisions within 8” of the overall commander are considered “in command” even if not within their corps commander’s radius. You remain stationary at your command post sipping tea or sherry, but can be persuaded to move up to 8” a turn. You concentrate on the movement of one or more

corps under your command. Within a corps are divisions and batteries, which are the maneuver blocks of the game.

Corps Commander

The **Corps Commander** (CC) controls the movement of all divisions within his corps. His figure moves in a straight line to his objective (see orders, **here**) if attacking, remaining motionless otherwise. All Corps Commanders within the order of battle should remain within 36" of the Army Commander. Corps Commanders are concerned with orders and élan, with which they control their units.

A single mounted model representing the CC is used to show his approximate location at the center of his divisions. He moves up to 8" a turn on the attack. All units under his command should remain at least partially within 8" of his base. All units move in accordance with the CC model's movement. Any unit that finds itself further than 8" from the CC at any time must move to regain command during the Movement Phase, unless in combat. If it can't move back into command in one turn, it must move towards the CC every Movement Phase until it is back under command. A Commander model cannot be targeted, and is simply moved to one side if it interferes with shooting or combat in any way.

Élan

Every Corps Commander is allotted between 1 and 6 élan points. The higher the points, the greater command and control the commander has of the battle. Élan is represented by a single die directly behind the commander model. As the number changes this die is rotated to note his current élan points. A list of historical generals and their élan value is located in the Advanced Rules section (see **here**).

If a division or battery is lost at any time during the battle, there is a potential for its Corps Commander to lose élan; likewise, if an enemy unit is defeated, there is a potential to gain élan. Élan can never be higher than six, but it can go to zero. A CC with zero élan has lost control and his division is automatically given retreat orders. If a commander has élan but no more units he retires from the field, forfeiting a single élan to the enemy.

Using Élan

A Corps Commander can choose to expend his own élan to influence the battle around him. Once per turn the commander may spend a point of élan

to perform one of the following actions:

- Reroll an activation roll
- Recover a single unit one unit status step (disordered to halted; halted to fresh)
- Change his Orders
- Reroll one attack in the Shooting or Combat Phase

A commander cannot voluntarily reduce his élan below 1. A player uses élan in the phase appropriate to the action. So, for example, if the élan is used to reroll a charge activation roll, it is used in the Charge Phase of the game. If it is to reroll combat dice, then it is in the resolution portion of the Combat Phase. Changing orders happens in the Command Phase.

Generating Élan for Non-Historical Games

When players choose to play a what-if scenario, or just want to plop down some men and have a quick fight, the first thing they will need to do is generate élan for their corps commanders. Roll a number of dice equal to the number of corps commanders in a force plus 1d3. The total rolled is distributed amongst the corps commanders in any way desired, with these two caveats: no commander may have an élan higher than 5 unless there are at least three corps on the table, in which case only one élan of six is allowed; and no commander may be given an élan of one. Any élan left over after legal distribution is discarded. If you roll all 1s, or not enough élan to meet the above requirements, reroll.

The Old Guard and Young Guard move forward to prepare for the final push.

General de Rationale

Élan is a key component in Absolute Emperor. It represents many intangible aspects of leadership in this era. If élan is thought of as courage, audacity, competence, determination, and morale all rolled into one, then this is but half the concept envisioned here. The other half is staff training, use of couriers, and command structure. But there is yet another component and that is the commanding general's trust in, and reliance upon, the subordinate commanders to carry out their orders without continual direction. While the command range of the general and his corps commanders in part represent the effective area of the battlefield an individual can control by himself, part of élan represents the permission to do so. The distance a courier can ride to deliver a message to change an order is less important than the corps commander's willingness to do so, in other words. Thus, as élan increase or decreases, it is the will, the willingness, and the ability to exert command and control that is actually being altered.

Phase 1: Command

Orders

At the beginning of the first turn, each Corps Commander is given an appropriate order tab (found at the rear of this book) and places it facedown under the CC base. The four possible orders are **Attack**, **Defend**, **Hold**, or **Flank March**. Attack orders mean that the CC must move towards a definable geographic feature on the table, such as a town, hill, wood, or crossroad. Defend and Hold orders require the Corps Commander to remain stationary near a geographical feature. In a Flank March the corps is off table to the left or right.

During the subsequent command phases a CC may spend élan to change their current order (see **here** for more on élan) as well as checking Unit Status, Loss of Corps, or whether Victory has been achieved (see **here** for details).

Attack

The CC and all units move toward the objective while maintaining command span. Units within 8” of the objective must attack enemy units within the objective area. Once any unit within his corps has control of the objective—not engaged in combat and no enemy units within 8”—the Commander’s orders immediately revert to Defend or Hold orders. All units not already on the objective may continue to move to positions on the objective. The Corps Commander changes his order tab to reflect new orders (for free during the next Command Phase) and places it face down to reflect the new order.

Defend

The CC remains stationary, but all units may move to defend the area within his command span. Defending infantry may not charge, but can countercharge; cavalry are free to act as normal within the command range of the CC. Artillery are unlimbered.

Hold

All units act as if on Defend orders. However, on a turn predetermined by the player by his tab number, the corps will switch over to Attack orders. So, a corps on Hold orders activates as an Attack order on turn three if his order tab has a number 3 on it. Any units within a corps under Hold orders that are attacked will prematurely convert to Attack orders immediately, and can move freely to that end.

Flank March

All units in the corps begin off table. Like Hold orders, the Flank March comes on the table at a predetermined turn (use a Hold order tab with the appropriate number, along with the Flank March Order tab), on the flank where the order tab is placed (face-down, so your opponent doesn't know when they are scheduled to arrive). Once on the table, a Flank March becomes an Attack order automatically. Only one Flank March per army is allowed in a game.

If both players attempt to flank march on the same side (both place tabs on the same side of the table), then the players roll a d6 the highest roll winning. The loser's flanking command enters on his own table edge on the turn noted on his tab. The winner of the roll off enters using the Flank March rules, above.

Retreat

All divisions and batteries within the corps not currently in combat move 8" towards their own board edge in the next Movement Phase. If an élan point is gained before the CC leaves the table edge, the Retreat orders automatically revert to Defend orders wherever he is standing, and all remaining units turn to face the enemy. Once any unit leaves the table, it is considered lost; if the unit exits the table as a result of Retreat orders, it does not count as a loss of élan.

An Austrian Grenzer division deploys in a town as a rearguard hoping to slow the French advance.

Phase 2: Movement

Movement is always measured from center of the front edge of the unit. Units may move up to their full distance given terrain and formation limitations, but are never compelled to unless as a result of combat. A unit can move in any direction. A unit can change formation for free at the beginning of movement, counting its movement rate as that of the new formation (see **here** for formations).

Friendly units may pass freely through each other with no penalty as long as there is physical room to do so. Units in combat, however, cannot be passed through, and a unit can never pass through an enemy unit. Two stationary units can't occupy the same space.

Interaction Zone

No unit may voluntarily move closer than 4" of an enemy unit's front unless it is conducting a charge to get into combat; once a unit is at, or within, the 4" boundary, it is affected by the other unit and must either act against it or withdraw out of range. Units have an interaction zone of 1" to each flank and the rear. If, for some reason, units end up closer, ignore it unless it creates an unplayable bottleneck, in which case simply move the units apart until the issue is resolved. The interaction zone of a unit deployed in towns, villages, or fortifications is 1" all around.

Movement in Built Up Areas

Large farmsteads, villages, towns and such areas are collectively called Built Up Areas (BUA). A segment of BUA is 6" square; larger towns are made of several sections of BUA squares adjacent to each other. Units may only move through a BUA in March Order, at no movement penalty. When a unit deploys in a section of BUA, it is placed around the perimeter to indicate that it is no longer formed, but rather deployed to take advantage of cover. Units outside of BUA can charge up to a BUA perimeter in any formation, but they are reduced to 2d6 total in Combat. Charging from one BUA section to another is the same as all other BUA combat. Only one unit may deploy and occupy a BUA section at any time. Other friendly units may pass through an occupied BUA but cannot halt there. No unit can pass through a BUA if units deployed there are in combat.

Retrograde Movements

The first type of retrograde movement is **Withdrawal**. If a player wants to back a unit away from the enemy to regain command and control, or simply to avoid an enemy's interaction zone, it can move back the distance allowed by the current formation during the Movement Phase. The unit ends the movement facing the enemy. For example, infantry in Line may move back 4" in open ground. Also, a withdrawal can be used to pivot back with one side or the other—this is handy if trying to bring a target unit into firing arc without getting closer than 4". Disordered units cannot withdraw during the Movement Phase. Units under attack orders cannot voluntarily withdraw.

Cavalry units may be forced to withdraw by enemy action. Whenever a cavalry unit fails to defeat an enemy unit in combat, it must make an 8" withdrawal back along its initial charge path. This type of withdrawal ends with the cavalry unit being disordered, unless it is contacted by the enemy cavalry unit making a follow up charge; in that case, the disorder occurs after all combat.

The second type of retrograde movement is **Evade**. An evade move is a cavalry reaction to an enemy charge (see **here** for more details). If a unit of cavalry is charged, it can evade to its rear 8". Infantry and artillery may never evade. Evading units face away from the charging unit; in the next turn, it may reform as halted, facing in any direction; It may not move but can charge or countercharge. The unit that charged an evading cavalry unit must move its full distance in the charge. A unit fighting another unit in combat, or a unit that is already within the enemy's interaction zone, may not evade.

The last type of retrograde movement is the **Recoil**. Only infantry recoil from a devastating combat result (see **here**). When a recoil result happens in open ground, the unit moves back 1", remains in its current formation, becomes disordered, and marks the number of hits received. When recoiling in any type of cover, the unit moves directly to the rear of that section of cover, forms into an Attack Column, becomes disordered, and marks the number of hits it received. In both instances, one enemy unit (the one inflicting the most combat damage) moves forward to remain in combat contact with the recoiling unit.

Murat at Borodino by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 246: *Borodino 1812*

Terrain

In general, there are three types of terrain: **Open Ground, Cover**, and **Difficult Ground**. All movement rates for each unit type and formation are given on the Unit Movement Table. A unit moving from one type of terrain to another moves at the rate of the slowest type. It is suggested that terrain be esthetically pleasing, but more importantly that it be representative. Because much of the terrain will have to be moved temporarily—set trees aside while a unit is moving through woods for example—I recommend modular terrain; the GM or players should , of course, use what they prefer.

Open Ground

Units move at their normal rates, based upon formation, in open ground. Open fields, pasture, and rolling hills are typical open ground. Hills may be covered by difficult ground or cover, and in these instances it also takes on the characteristics of that type of terrain. Hills confer shooting and combat penalties to the units attacking uphill.

Cover

Walls, hedgerows, improvised barriers, crop laden summer fields, thickets of shrubs and forested areas all constitute cover. Each segment of cover is 6” square (but can take oblong or irregular shapes if not a BUA); larger

areas constitute more segments joined together. Cover comes in three types: BUA, Linear and Area.

- **BUA** (Built Up Areas) are congested areas such as villages, towns, large villas, and redoubts. A BUA is different than other cover in that is it offers better protection from shooting and makes an excellent defensive position that is difficult to assault in the Charge and Combat Phases. Defense in a BUA is all-around for any unit deployed in it. Deploying into a BUA is a formation change. The interaction zone of units deployed in BUA sections is 1”.
- **Fortifications** are a type of BUA that are purposely designed to act as a defensive barrier, with thick walls and covered firing ports. These are treated exactly as a BUA above, except that when shooting at targets within a fortification hits are only scored on a 6, and when attacking a fortification in combat a unit fights as the next lowest grade of troop—e.g. Veterans fight as Seasoned, Seasoned as Conscript, Conscript remain Conscript.
- **Linear Cover** (walls, hedges, wagon laager, etc.) conveys a defensive bonus only if shooting or combat is happening across it. It does not convey all around cover. Linear cover affects both shooting and combat so long as the attacks cross the cover. Each section is 6” long and can be manned by a single infantry unit.
- **Area Cover**, such as forest or thicket, provides cover from all directions. Larger areas of forest or scrubby undergrowth thickets are made up of 6” (square or diameter) sections. Each section can contain a single Deployed unit, just like with BUAs. The interaction zone is reduced to 1”. Units receive a penalty when shooting into cover. However, area cover provides no combat defensive bonus, and no units receive a charge bonus in area cover. A unit partially within cover counts the entire unit as in cover.

Difficult Ground

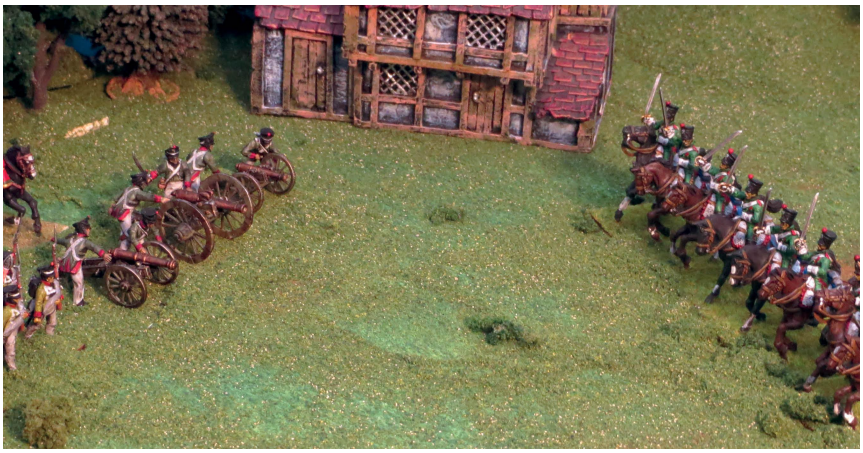
Any ground that is difficult for units to pass through yet conveys no cover — for example muddy fields, bogs, briars, rocky fields, and desert sands are difficult ground. If any part of a unit is in difficult ground, then the unit is considered in difficult ground. Each area or length should be irregularly shaped and 6” in length or diameter.

- S**treams** are difficult ground in all respects but, additionally, a unit must stop once it contacts a stream. In the next Movement Phase the unit is free to move using the difficult ground measurements for its unit type. At no time may a unit charge into any part of a stream, but a unit that has moved into a stream can charge out of it. A unit charging out of a stream is disordered for the combat. Fords and bridges are crossed in March Order only, as if along a road, with no difficult ground effects.

General de Rationale

Built up areas are best represented as sections of cobblestone-looking cloth or felt with unfixed buildings placed on top. These battlefield features are prominent in virtually all battles of the period. The representation, as with troops, gives the visual clues, but the models can be more easily placed within the confines of the BUA.

While there is nothing unusual about terrain definitions and use in Absolute Emperor, it must be remembered that the scale of the game means that many notable features that might be read about in reports of the day, such as the fight at the sand pit at Waterloo, are in fact battalion and regimental scale geographic features. Thus, in our example, while the sand pit seems prominent from a historical perspective, it was only a portion of the British line being held in that sector that would also include La Haye Sainte. Therefore, whenever a player wants to model exact features from history in their scenario here, it is important to understand the larger scale reduces such key features to a portion of the area a division or corps may occupy. Only truly large or important features need be represented for game purposes. Any other lesser features are modeled simply for esthetic purposes.



The Russians have amassed a grand battery to deal death to the oncoming French. The task of silencing the guns has fallen upon a division of French line cavalry.

Phase 3: Shooting

As with real war, many factors go into determining who is winning. To simulate the effects of luck, training, and morale, the player resolves all shooting with six-sided dice. All shooting is simultaneous within the Phase, but each event is rolled for individually and the resolution noted immediately. Each player rolls the appropriate number of dice to determine an outcome for each separate shooting event. Once a resolution has been applied (see **here**), the players move on to the next event.

In shooting, units stand a distance away from the enemy and engage them through skirmishing, musketry, or cannonade. All shooting is measured directly ahead from the leading edge of the nearest base to the target. There is no deviation from straight ahead. Measure up to the maximum range of the shooting unit from both front corners and if any part of the target unit is contacted, it is a valid target.

Units can shoot once per turn, at the closest legal enemy unit. More than one unit may fire at the same enemy unit, but a single unit may only target one enemy unit. If two target units are equidistant, then the shooting unit chooses which one to target.

If a unit is partially blocked by terrain or friendly units, then shooting is reduced by 1d6. To determine if a unit is partially blocked from shooting, draw a line from each front corner of the shooting unit to the target. If one of the lines crosses terrain, another unit, or any obstacle, then shooting is blocked. If more than half the unit is blocked, then it cannot shoot. There is absolutely no shooting into a combat.

Infantry

An infantry unit shoots with 4d6 in Line, 2d6 in Attack Column and 1d6 in March Order. All shooting is from the front rank. A unit, regardless of modifiers, may always roll 1d6 in the Shooting Phase if there is a legal, valid target.

Artillery

Artillery shooting is different from infantry shooting; artillery batteries, unlike infantry divisions, attack only through shooting. Artillery, like infantry, fire directly ahead measuring a straight line from both front

corners up to 18”. If either line touches an enemy unit, it is a viable target. Artillery also shoots only at the nearest target. There is no overhead shooting allowed; if a target unit lies behind a wood or hill it cannot be targeted.

Artillery fires using 2d6, needing 5+ to hit.

- Canister range is 6”. Up to 2 hits can be counted.
- From 6” to 18” is effective shot range. Both dice are rolled, but only count the highest die as the result.
- If shooting at targets within cover, BUA, or fortifications, 1d6 is rolled instead of 2d6.

General de Rationale

The interaction zone between opposing units—aka the zone of control—is an abstracted area where units engage in what we are here calling the “Shooting Phase”. “The 4th light battalion moved into the wood to clear out the enemy sharpshooters”, or “the colonel moved his guns to fire down the road, scattering the enemy horse lingering there“—these examples are representative of the types of narrative one reads in virtually all first-hand accounts of the “small battles” during the period. Often, when reading monographs of famous battles, we read of the vast French columns moving ever forward to crash into the enemy lines, or the stalwart British line shooting away the heads of the French columns; whilst these generalizations are absolutely a major part of the large battles, there are thousands of troops dispatched in company- and battalion-sized units conducting all types of operations in every single battle before, during, and after such momentous maneuvers. All of these activities are abstracted into the Shooting Phase. Any resultant degradation of the parent unit can be viewed in large part as these detached battalions being used up and no longer combat effective for the big push. Aesthetically, the interaction zone presents the eye as a sense of “shooting” from one unit to another, but the abstracted portions of the battle it represents is far more involved than what meets the eye.

How to Read Dice Modifiers

When a situation in shooting or combat calls for a player to add or subtract dice (e.g. +1d6), it means the player adds or subtracts that many d6 to what

he will roll. A player shooting a Seasoned division of infantry in Line formation would roll 4d6, for example, but if the unit was partially blocked from line of site the penalty is -1d6, so the unit would roll 3d6. If there is a legal shot, a unit can always roll 1d6. Below are the modifiers to all infantry and artillery shooting.

A listing of "total" (e.g. 1d6 total) means that all other factors that add dice are ignored.

Infantry Shooting Basics

- Infantry shooting range is 4".
- Infantry shoot 4d6 in Line.
- Infantry shoot 2d6 in Attack Column.
- Infantry shoot 1d6 in March Order.
- Infantry shooting from a BUA rolls 2d6 per side.
- Fresh and Halted units may shoot.

The Charge of the Spanish Cavalry Regiment El Rey by Graham Turner © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 253: *Talavera 1809*

- Disordered units may not shoot.
- Infantry in Square formation cannot shoot.
- Infantry not in Square shooting at a Square: +1d6.
- Target partially blocked: -1d6
- Target in area cover: -1d6.

- Target uphill: -1d6.
- Target behind a wall, in BUA or fortification: -2d6.
- Shooting at a fortification: hit on 6 only.
- Infantry units that are under threat of cavalry charge may choose to voluntarily form Square rather than shoot.
- An infantry unit that shot normally, but then elects to form Square because of charging cavalry, can only do so on an activation roll. Failing the roll, the unit remains in its current formation and becomes disordered.

Artillery Shooting Basics

- Artillery shoots 2d6 per unit and hits on a 5+.
- Canister range is 6”, effective (shot) range is 6–18”.
- Artillery shooting at canister range counts both dice in determining results.
- Artillery shooting at effective range counts only the highest roll as its result.
- Artillery in grand battery (3 guns) rolls 6d6 and hits on a 4+; counting all six dice for canister, or the three highest dice at effective range.
- Artillery shooting at targets within cover, BUA, or fortifications rolls 1d6.
- Artillery shooting at artillery or a fortification hit on a 6 only.
- Artillery shooting at canister range against an Attack Column, March Order, flank or rear of a unit rerolls one unsuccessful hit roll.
- Artillery shooting at an enemy unit in Square: +3d6 (up to 3 hits may be counted for all ranges).

Phase 4: Charges

All units that are not halted or disordered (see **here**) and have enemy within their own charge range may charge unless prevented from doing so by orders. All charges are measured directly ahead with no deviation or turns. Charging units always conform to the target unit when aligning the battle. To conform, the charging unit slides as necessary to align the bases front edges to contact, as best as possible, so that both units line up with bases in contact with each other. In order to charge, the charging unit must be able to physically fit in the space it wishes to charge; for example, a unit in Line Formation cannot charge down a street. In order to physically fit, a unit may always reduce formation frontage to avoid obstacles and friendly units.

Charge Basics

- Cavalry charges 8”.
- Infantry charges 4”.
- Only fresh units may charge.
- Halted and disordered units may not charge.
- To charge a flank, the charging unit must have at least one base behind a line extending from the front edge of the target unit.
- To charge the rear, the charging unit must have at least one base behind a line extending back from the flank edge of the target unit.
- Follow up charges cost one hit to the charging unit.

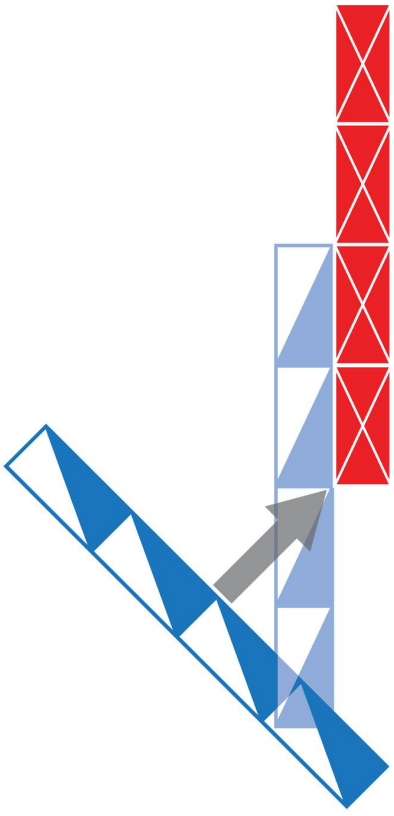
Countercharge

If the target of the charge is also within range to charge and is not halted or disordered, it can countercharge. In such cases, both units must roll their activation number in order to charge. If only one succeeds, then it is assumed the other failed to charge in time. If both succeed, then they both charge and meet halfway. If neither succeeds, then there are no charges from either unit. A unit cannot countercharge a cavalry follow up charge.

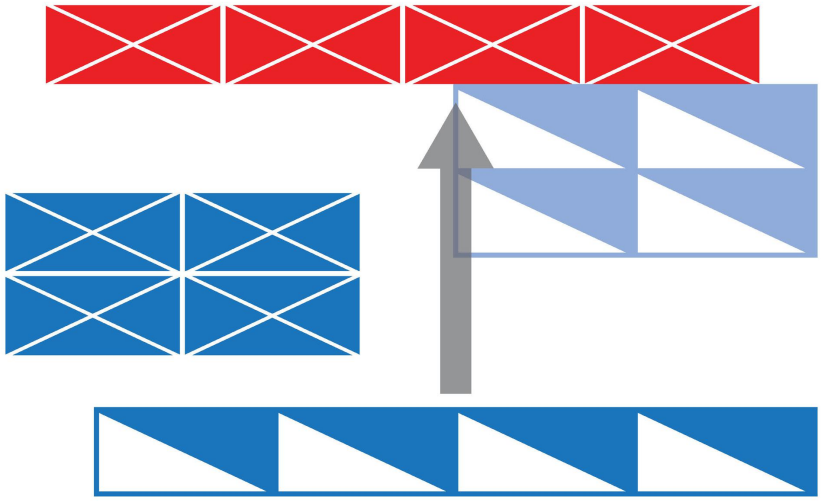
Reaction Charge

If a cavalry unit can intercept the charging unit before it arrives at its intended target, it may conduct a reaction charge. The reaction chargers must roll their activation number in order to charge, even if the intended target was not originally a legal target; once the target moves into the reacting unit's charge arc it becomes a legal target. For example, a cavalry unit is planning to charge an infantry unit to its front, but an enemy cavalry unit wants to react to that charge by charging them in the flank; both players roll activation and follow the results listed in countercharge, above. A unit can reaction charge a follow up charge as long as it is not the target of the follow up. In the example, if the reaction charge were successful, both units would meet as with countercharge, front edge to front edge.

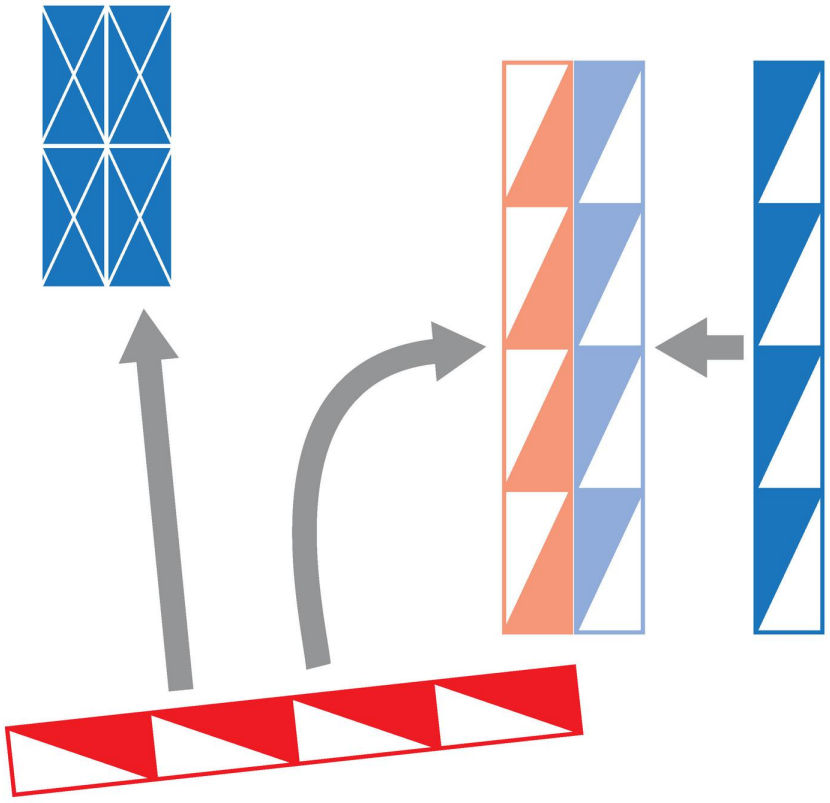
In both countercharge and reaction charges, if both units are successful in their activation rolls, they meet between their starting positions, even if one were not able to do so normally. The two units conform to each other.



The French Dragoons have charged a British Unit of infantry. The charge is directly ahead until contact, then the dragoons pivot to conform to the infantry unit's facing. Once flush with the target unit facing, the dragoons may slide down the minimum necessary in order to align to the nearest base corner contact.



In this example, the French Dragoons in line want to charge a British Unit of infantry. The charge is directly ahead until contact, but in order to make the charge the dragoons must change to Squadrons formation to pass by the French infantry unit in the way. This is a free formation change, and the only type of formation change allowed in the charge phase.



Interception by Reaction Charge

Follow Up Charge

A cavalry unit that wins a round of combat against an enemy cavalry unit may attack them again as they withdraw. A second round of combat is fought with updated modifiers. In the swirling combat of an all-cavalry fight, once a unit tries to withdraw the enemy will—if not themselves overwhelmed—pursue the beaten foe.

Continuing Charges

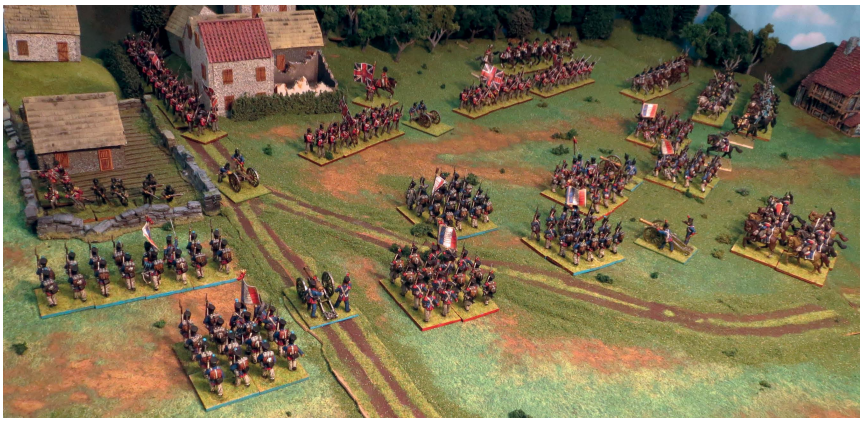
Cavalry that charges, countercharges, or reaction charges, and fights a successful combat, must continue to move toward and charge enemy units every turn after the initial successful charge. Every charge turn that a cavalry unit charges after the first, it receives one hit to represent fatigue of the horses and general disorder. If a cavalry unit fails to beat their target they withdraw automatically; they are no longer required to continue charging.

Recalling Cavalry

A Corps Commander can recall cavalry after any turn other than the initial charge turn in one of two ways: he can either roll a 6+ activation roll, or expend a single élan in the next command Phase. Otherwise, cavalry continue seeking out targets and charging until exhausted, destroyed, or withdrawn.

A recalled cavalry unit moves 8” towards the commander’s base, facing the enemy, and becomes disordered.

A unit that is charged and itself did not charge is not subject to this rule, but it will always follow up charge; if the follow up charge results in victory, then these rule apply as though a charge had been ordered.



As the French division approach the British defensive positions, the thin red line prepares to hold near Vitoria.

Phase 5: Combat

Combat is when units engage each other in point-blank volleys, sabers, and bayonets. All combat is initiated originally through charges (see **here**). Units can only roll combat dice along their front edge. Units that charge, or have been charged, and are in base-to-base contact roll 4d6 in Line formation, 2d6 in Attack Column or Squadron formation, and 1d6 in March Order, plus or minus a number of modifiers (see **here**). Each unit fights only once per turn. If neither unit is recoiled or destroyed they remain in contact until the next turn, when they'll fight another round in the Combat Phase. Units may, if there is physical space, charge into an existing combat.

Multiple-Unit Combat

In multiple-unit combats, the players need to segment the combat according to bases in contact and/or overlapping a base in combat. Only front-rank bases count for combat dice. Units in multiple-unit combat that are contacting each other in some fashion all count as one combat, with the results affecting the units as they are grouped.

Cavalry Effects on Multiple-unit Combats

If a unit is in contact with more than one enemy unit, the modifiers used are determined by the unit type in contact. If one of the units is cavalry and it is fighting infantry not in Square, the results of the combat will be in accordance with Cavalry vs. Infantry Not in Square. The reverse is not true. Always use the most advantageous modifiers to the attacker.

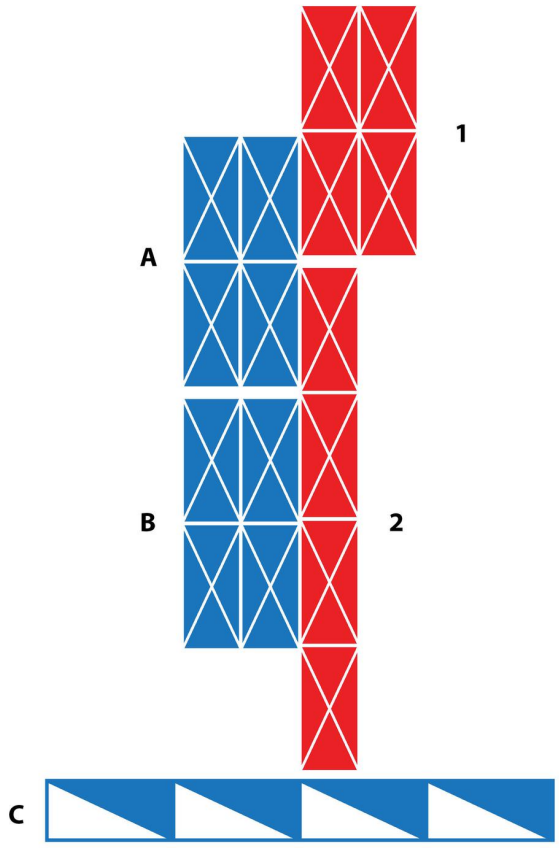
Change Facing in Combat

If a unit was in combat with an enemy unit on its flank or rear in the previous turn, it can attempt to turn and face it by rolling an activation roll to do so. If it fails the activation roll, it remains in its current formation and becomes disordered. If it is already disordered, the unit must roll a waver test.

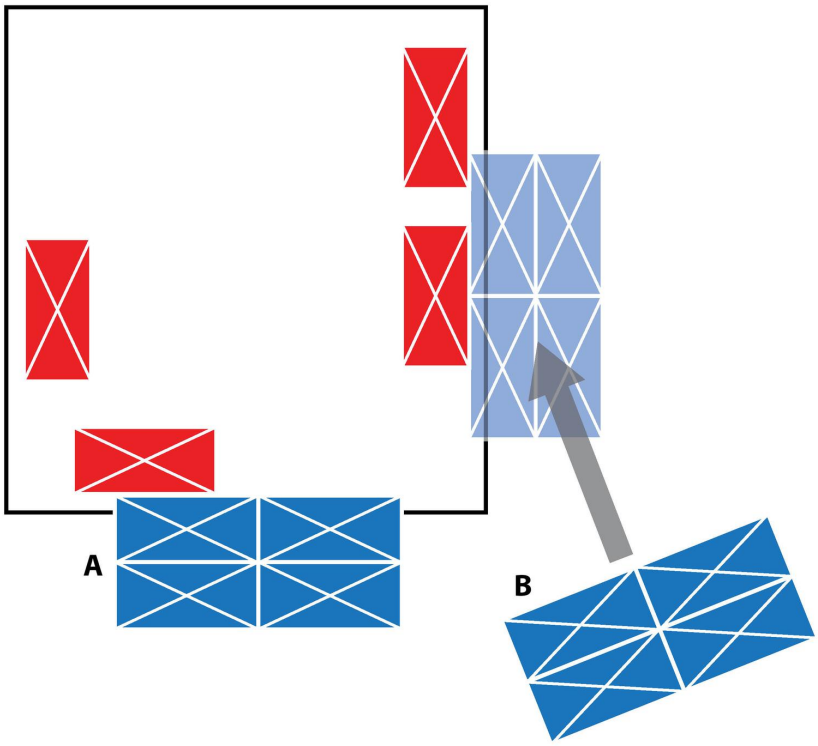
Combat Against an Infantry in a BUA

Units in a BUA can only be charged and fight in combat against one enemy unit per side, but it can fight against all sides at the same time. If the

Deployed unit is already in combat to one side, any additional units charging the BUA must do so against other sides. The Deployed unit always fights with 2d6 per side. Units in a BUA cannot charge.



In this example of a multiple unit combat, all to hit rolls by British unit 1 will be allocated to French unit A. All to hit rolls by British unit 2 will be against French unit B. The French player must allocate all of B and half of A to hit rolls to British unit 2. Dragoon unit C will be attacking only unit 2. Unit A just charged into contact; thus he will allocate 2d6 (charge and 1 element in contact) to unit 1. Unit A will also allocate 1d6 to unit 2 (one element in contact). Unit B and unit 2 will continue a combat from last turn with B fighting with 2d6 (two elements in contact) and unit 2 fights with 2d6 against unit B (two elements in contact) and 1d6 against unit A (one element in contact). Since unit C is charging into combat with unit 2, it will roll 7d6 , (four dice plus charge bonus and flank bonus). Note that the overlapping element of unit 2 with an attack on its flank rolls no dice.



In order for unit B to charge the BUA, it must have a legal charge that would contact a side that is not already in combat. Because the side is in charge arc and range, B may charge the BUA.

Combat Modifiers

There are a number of extraordinary situations that determine how many dice to use to resolve the combat. Below is a list of attack modifiers. Remember, each modifier adds/ subtracts or limits the total number of d6 rolled in a situation.

How to Read Dice Modifiers

When a situation in shooting or combat calls for a player to add or subtract dice (e.g. +1d6), it means the player adds or subtracts that many d6 that he will roll. A Seasoned division of infantry in Line formation charging uphill would roll 4d6 (4d6 for Line formation +1d6 for charging -1d6 for uphill).

A listing of "total" (e.g. 1d6 total) means that all other factors that add dice are ignored.

Combat Basics

- Infantry rolls 4d6 in Line.
- Infantry rolls 2d6 in Attack Column.

- Infantry rolls 1d6 total in March Order.
- Cavalry rolls 4d6 in Line.
- Cavalry rolls 2d6 in Squadrons.
- Cavalry rolls 1d6 total in March Order.
- Artillery rolls 1d6 total.

General Effects

- Charge, countercharge or reaction charge bonus: +1d6 (unless otherwise noted) in first round.
- Infantry receive no charge bonus when charging into cover.
- Cavalry attacking infantry not in Square: +2d6.
- Attacking a unit behind a wall or hedge: -1d6.
- Attacking uphill: -1d6.
- Infantry not in Square vs. cavalry: 1d6 total.

Infantry Square

- Cavalry attacking infantry Square: 1d6 total.
- Infantry Square vs. cavalry: 3d6 per side.
- Infantry attacking infantry Square: +2d6.
- Infantry Square fighting other infantry: 1d6 total per side.

BUA Combat

- Defending a BUA or fortification: 2d6 per side.
- Attacking a unit in a BUA: 2d6 total.
- Attacking a fortification: fight at one grade lower.

Artillery in Combat

- Infantry or cavalry attacking an artillery unit: +2d6.

State and Formation Effects

- Disordered units reroll one successful hit roll in combat.
- Attacking the flank or rear of a unit: +2d6.
- A unit cannot fight to its flank or rear.

The retreat from Moscow by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 246: *Borodino 1812*

Shooting and Combat Resolution

All hits are cumulative over the course of the game. A unit resolves all hits that it receives at the end of the Phase, before moving on to the next Phase. An eight-sided die is placed directly behind the unit of cavalry or infantry to keep a running total of the hits the unit has received throughout the game. A four-sided die is used for artillery. Players may, if they choose, use other tracking methods.

The entire French army needed to play the Waterloo scenario.

Unit Exhaustion

Once a unit receives a cumulative total of 5 hits, its ability to continue the fight is reduced. To reflect this, a unit with 5 or more hits is reduced in effectiveness to the next lowest type: Veteran becomes Seasoned, Seasoned become Conscript, Conscript are reduced to reroll all successful hits.

An infantry or cavalry division that receives a cumulative total of **8 hits** is removed from play as effectively combat exhausted.

Artillery Resolution

- Artillery are never halted. They become disordered with 2 hits, and destroyed if they receive a total of 4 hits cumulatively, in shooting; or take 1 or more hits in combat.

General de Rationale

In the course of most battle histories, units are noted as fighting, falling back, reforming, then charging in again until eventually one side or the

other is overwhelmed with exhaustion and breaks. New battalions are rushed in to plug the gap and the fight goes on until there are no more reserves. When we abstract this into the larger division maneuver units, it is best represented by the use of 1d8 to mark the overall combat effectiveness of the division. As battalions become exhausted, the number on the d8 increases. When over fifty percent of the division's troops are combat ineffective (5 or more on the d8), the division is exhausted, losing its ability to fulfil the role assigned to the division. Once the division reaches 8 casualty points, it is removed as no longer combat effective; all its battalions having been slaughtered, captured or run off.

Extraordinary Resolutions

Situations within the game may require additional effects on units within each Phase, beyond the cumulative hit point tally. These extraordinary resolutions represent the ebb and flow of battle as concentrations of fire and/or unexpected causes of unease play upon troop morale.

Every result in a single Shooting or Combat Phase will result in an extraordinary resolution if one of the following totals occurs:

Shooting Phase

- 2 hits cause a unit to become halted.
- 4 hits cause a unit to become disordered (see **here**).
- 5+ hits cause a unit to take a waver test in addition to any above results.

Combat Phase

- 3 hits cause an infantry unit recoil from combat 1" and become disordered; cavalry withdraw and become disordered (see **here**).
- 5+ hits cause a unit to take a waver test in addition to any above results.

Definitions

Halted

The unit can shoot or combat as normal, but cannot move, change formation (except to form emergency Squares), or charge. Halted represents a temporary disorder or confusion amongst the ranks and command;

redressing the lines, they are still perfectly capable of engaging in shooting or combat, but cannot charge.

The retaking of the Santa Barbara Redoubt, 13 October 1813 by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 266: *Bayonne and Toulouse 1813–14*

Recoil

A unit that suffers a recoil resolution moves 1” directly back, facing the unit that forced them to recoil, and becomes disordered. The attacking unit, if not in combat with another unit, may follow up and remain in combat contact for the next turn. A recoiling unit is one in which the troops are confused in battle, lost orientation, and the local commanders are trying to disengage from the fight in order to reestablish control over the men.

Disorder

Units cannot move, charge, or shoot while disordered. If in combat, the disordered unit rerolls one successful hit roll. Disordered units are thoroughly confused—either the enemy fire was overly effective in decimating the ranks, or the troops are in a panic and thinking of home. In any event, it will take the local commanders a long time to recover the unit as combat effective.

Withdrawal

In combat, a cavalry unit that fails to best its opponent will withdraw 8” to its rear. Cavalry hit hard, but they lack staying power. Once the men sense their impetus is lost and the enemy appear to be everywhere, the local commander sounds the recall and they try to disengage.

Waver Test

If a unit receives a waver test result from any shooting or combat action, it rolls an activation roll based on its current status. For example, a Veteran division that has been downgraded to Seasoned status through exhaustion that must make a waver test needs to roll 4+ to succeed, rather than the 3+ of a Veteran unit.

Russian infantry divisions supported by an artillery battery take up defensive positions in the long retreat after the Ulm campaign in 1805.

General de Rationale

Extraordinary resolutions, those things we read about in histories as notable high or low lights of a battle, are memorable as exceptions to the normal attritional nature of ground warfare at this time. A Square broken by cavalry, a battery of guns thwarting a larger infantry attack—there are many examples throughout the period where a battalion, battery, or regiment gained renown for changing the course of the battle. In Absolute Emperor such events are generated randomly with dice. In other words, extraordinary dice rolling generates extraordinary battlefield events.

Post-Resolution Combat Results

After combat, there are tactical and doctrinal factors that may create a combat imbalance. Below are listed a number of special results of a resolved combat. Each must be enforced to add period realism.

- Cavalry that are successful in destroying their target unit make another charge straight ahead if there is another target unit is range. This combat takes place immediately.
- Cavalry that do not defeat their charge target must withdraw 8" after combat.
- Cavalry units that force an opposing cavalry unit to withdraw must charge the same target again as a follow-up charge once per turn (see **here**). The follow-up combat is conducted immediately, and costs the pursuing cavalry unit 1 hit point.
- Cavalry that are disordered or withdraws from combat cannot follow up charge.
- Infantry not in Square that lose to cavalry are destroyed and removed from play.
- Infantry units that win combat are no longer halted or disordered, even if they were so before combat, or were made so during the combat.
- Artillery that is contacted by charging cavalry or infantry is destroyed if it receives any hits. The cavalry may not make a breakthrough charge.
- Any unit withdrawing may deviate around friendly units or terrain if it is capable of fitting within the space proposed (changing formation if necessary).

General de Rationale

As with the nature of Napoleonic combat and training, some results of combat and/or shooting will gain advantageous results, particularly where cavalry are involved. These post resolution results are inevitable when, within the flavor of the period, units are caught in stereotypical circumstances. Infantry charged by cavalry and failing to form Square, artillery that are charged by enemy units and hit—these types of events happened regularly and add period flavor here in Absolute Emperor. Unlike Extraordinary results, post combat resolutions are inevitable.

Unit Status

At the end of the Command Phase, all units not in combat improve status by one step automatically: disordered become halted, halted become fresh.

Save the Colors!

Regardless of hits inflicted in combat or shooting, in a phase where an infantry, artillery, or cavalry unit fails a waver test, has been destroyed through post resolution combat results, or has accumulated a total of 8 hits, the controlling player must immediately make an activation roll. If the roll is successful, then the unit retires from the field with integrity and colors intact; no élan is gained or lost. If unsuccessful, then the unit is overrun and one élan (along with some regimental colors) is transferred from the losing corps commander to the victorious corps commander.

General de Rationale

Warfare in the musket age, as indeed with any age, is about maintaining the initiative. As units engage and become exhausted, commanders lose the ability to maneuver them at need. When entire divisions are rendered combat ineffective, the impetus, or momentum, changes or slows. Sometimes it switches to the other side. This shift to the other side is represented by élan changing hands through "save the colors".

Loss of Corps

Once a Corps Commander's élan is reduced to 0, all units under his command fall back 8" in the next turn as a retreat movement. If in combat, the unit remains so until an outcome is reached. If, for any reason, an élan point is gained by the commander during the retreat, all units in his corps stop the retreat and act as normal under Defend orders. Otherwise, they continue to fall back each turn until they are off the table edge.

If a commander has élan but no infantry or cavalry units remaining, then the corps retires from the field (removed from play) and one élan is given to the victorious opposing corps commander. The corps commander's remaining élan is not counted when determining who has the initiative in the turn after removal, or for Victory purposes, as they have been lost.

With the loss of each corps, the overall commander must test resolve. A roll of 1 on 1d6 results in one corps adjacent to the retreating corps changing orders to Defend if currently under Attack orders; or retreat if

under Defend or Hold orders. If the army has lost half or more of all corps, a roll of 1,2 or 3 means the entire army retires from the field and the game is lost. A Corps Commander can sacrifice an élan point, allowing the overall commander to attempt a reroll here, but not for a corps that has been forced to retire due to 0 élan or lack of maneuver units.

Victory

At the end of the game in the command phase, the players total up élan for victory purposes; counting all élan currently held by corps commanders. There are three possible victory outcomes:

- If, at the end of a predetermined number of turns, one side has more, but not twice as much, élan than the other, the side with the greater élan is declared the marginal victor.
- If at any time one side has twice the élan of the opponent, the game ends immediately with a respectable victory.
- If at any time one side's total élan is zero, the other side has gained a strategic victory.

Advanced Rules

Archaic Command Structures

In every army other than the French prior to 1805 (and some long after), the command structure was based on a brigading system. In this system the regiment, made of one or two battalions, was the only organic unit that existed as a permanent military formation. Any higher military formation—brigade and division—were ad-hoc formations created at the time of need, and these formations were principally placed under the command of a peer of the monarch (usually related directly or through marriage), who was surrounded by sycophants more than tacticians. Once Napoleon started defeating these armies, the monarchs took notice and began supporting military reforms that allowed for permanent command structures at higher levels along the French model. If players want to play earlier campaigns, as will be seen in the Eylau scenario, archaic command structures can be utilized to give the correct feel to these combats. In short, each division receives its orders directly from the overall commander. In such instances the overall commander becomes the only corps commander for game purposes, with an élan of six. His command range remains the same as with other corps commanders of his nationality, however there are two differences that must be adhered to in order to give the proper feel. First, a division must begin a turn in command range in order for the Generalissimo to issue it an order. Second, once given an order, the division must continue to adhere to those orders until it is successful, issued new orders, or destroyed; a six sided die can be placed behind the division and used to denote (1) Attack, (2) Defend, and (3) Hold orders. Divisions out of command range must always adhere to the last orders given, with the exception that cavalry units will always charge enemy cavalry or artillery units that come within charge range. The Overall General uses one élan per turn (rather than one per unit) to issue any number of divisional orders for that turn to divisions within his command range.

Detachments

Often divisions would detach a number of battalions to guard a certain feature, such as a bridge crossing or a village intersection. Such

detachments were a way to slow, rather than stop, a determined enemy from taking a certain route prior to, or during, a battle. If a player wants to use a detachment for such a purpose, he may only deploy a maximum of one per corps. The detachment should be made up of a single base, constituting roughly one quarter of the division's size; figuratively this would be a brigade. Detachments are always on Defend orders, regardless of the orders of its corps commander. The detachment has the same characteristics as the parent division, but it only has three hit points, rather than the normal eight of a full division. The parent division starts the game with six hit points and uses a six-sided die for marking casualties as a way of remembering. Once a detachment is placed, it cannot voluntarily move from the point of deployment. If it is forced to withdraw or fall back, it does so towards the parent division. If the division has been rendered combat ineffective and removed from play, the detachment withdraws toward the nearest cover within the command span of its corps commander and assumes Defend orders. If the parent division makes contact with the detachment during the Movement Phase, the detachment can be reabsorbed into the division. Any hits the detachment has received are reduced to one hit on the parent unit, in addition to any hits the parent division already has.

The Allied retreat across the Satschan Ponds by Christa Hook © Osprey Publishing Ltd.
Taken from Campaign 101: *Austerlitz 1805*

Guard Units

It is not essential to represent Guard quality troops separately from Veteran quality. However, guard units, especially the French Imperial Guard, evoke such a sense of period majesty that everyone seems to relate to them in some way. No one ever says: "*I wish I had been a private in a line company, fourth battalion.*" Rather people think they, too, could have been a member of the Old Guard. So, I've included a variation that allows people to give the guards that little something extra without terribly unbalancing the game.

Elite/Guard Infantry

Representing only those very best infantry units such as the French Old and Middle Guard, Pavlov Grenadiers, Coldstream Guards and the like. They are treated exactly like Veteran infantry, except they reroll all unsuccessful hits, and can always form Square regardless of activation roll. Any friendly non-elite infantry unit within 8" that has line of sight on one of these units, and sees it eliminated, must immediately take a waver test. If the unit passes, all is well. If it fails, it becomes disordered.

Elite/Guard Cavalry

Any guard or cuirassier cavalry unit distinguished by virtue of a combination of élan, training, quality of horses, and/or armor as elite cavalry. Like Line Cavalry in every other respect, they have two bonuses: first, enemy Light, Line, or Lancer cavalry in combat with one of these units rerolls one successful hit, regardless if it is a charge, counter charge, or combat. Second, this type of cavalry unit always activates for a countercharge or a reaction charge even if disordered.

Grand Batteries

- No army may use grand batteries before 1807.
- Only the French and Russians may use them until 1812.
- Everyone can use them after 1812.

Historical Corps Commanders Élan

This list is not exhaustive or even extensive, but I did want to give players a place to start looking at historical figures and their possible élan. The lists shown here are not complete for two main reasons. First, how a particular

general or marshal was viewed through the lens of history is very subjective both in terms of who is writing and who is reading about him. For example, some see Messina as a man whose brilliance equals, if not surpasses, that of the young Bonaparte; others see him as a self-serving old smuggler looking to get rich above all else. There is also the problem of time in the roughly ten years we try to cover in this booklet. Not all of the commanders listed below, and indeed not all that could be named, had the advantage to shine fully due to when, and in what respects, they participated. Here are two examples: If General Mack had been operating with an army after the Austrian military reforms in 1809, would his force have been so immobilized as to not be able to effect even a partial escape from the French encirclement? Was it Mack or the archaic command structure? Second, was Bernadotte's increasing ineffectiveness as the wars continued due to his ineptitude or his indifference to Napoleon over time? In both cases, it is very subjective and unfair of me to assign a permanent number that is wholly based upon my own filters. This list is my understanding of the battlefield value of these gentlemen, therefore, and I do not expect anyone to agree fully. You will notice that I've included most of the French Marshals, and that is mainly because these fellows were mostly there for the entire Napoleonic period. Others may have made one or two appearances at most, thus there is less weight to their numbers.

French Commanders			
Commander	**Élan**	**Commander**	**Élan**
Augereau	4	Lannes	4
Bernadotte	3	Lobau	3
Bertheir	4	MacDonald	4
Bessières	3	Masséna	5
d'Erlon	3	Milhaud	3
Davout	5	Murat	5
Desaix	3	Ney	5
Dorsenne	4	Oudinot	4
Drouot	5	Rielle	3
Grouchy	4	Soult	4
Jérôme	2	Vandamme	4
Jourdan	2	Victor	3
Kellermann	3		

Austrian Commanders			
Commander	**Élan**	**Commander**	**Élan**
Bellegarde	3	Melas	3
Charles	5	Ott	2
Mack	3	Rosenberg	3
Joseph	3	von Zach	3
Liechtenstein	3		

British Commanders			
Commander	**Élan**	**Commander**	**Élan**
Anson	3	Picton	5
Hill	5	Uxbridge	2
Orange	2		

Prussian Commanders			
Commander	**Élan**	**Commander**	**Élan**
Blücher	5	Pirch	3
Bülow	3	Thielmann	2
L'Estocq	3	Zieten	3

Spanish Commanders		Russian Commanders	
Commander	**Élan**	**Commander**	**Élan**
Cuesta	2	Bagration	4
de Palafox	4	Buxhoeveden	3
Castaños	4	Dokhturov	3

Horse Artillery

There are no horse artillery units in the basic game, as they didn't traditionally form into large batteries. Instead they are incorporated into the combat factors for the infantry and cavalry units they are attached to. Players in pickup games are allowed one horse artillery battery per three corps after 1805. As with field artillery, these units are a single cannon model with two figures. To distinguish it from other artillery, I suggest a horse model on a separate base to note if the unit is limbered or not. Horse

artillery can only shoot once per turn, exactly as field artillery, but they shoot with 1d6 rather than 2d6. This represents the smaller caliber and number of guns typical of such batteries. The base move for horse artillery is 6”. Horse batteries can do any combination of the following:

- Move three times
- Move, unlimber and shoot
- Unlimber and shoot
- Shoot
- Move twice and unlimber
- Limber and move twice

Horse artillery units have only two hits, as the smaller size of such batteries mean they are quickly routed when damaged.

Lancers

These units act just as Line Cavalry in all respects, except they roll an additional 1d6 on their initial charge/countercharge, and if withdrawing from cavalry that follow up, lancers reroll one successful hit; this simulates the relative difficulty lancers had in combat once the advantage of the lance was lost.

Limited Ammunition

For those gamers that want a certain level of frustration in their game, limiting ammo for artillery is a great way to add a level of complexity into the game that is sure to please. There are three ways to add limited ammo into the game:

First is to begin the game with all artillery operating as normal. Every time a battery fires, it is marked with a penny (or marked on a tally sheet, or any tracking method if you like) as having burned through one quarter of its supplies. After four such full strength shots, its ammo is depleted and the guns fire using only 1d6 to roll for hits. After another four shots at depleted ammo, the guns go silent and are withdrawn to the rear.

Wagram looking southwest from Baumersdorf. The French corps of Messina (far ground) are holding against the pressure of the Austrian attack under Lichtenstein, as Odinout's corps struggles to take the town and break the Austrian center (foreground).

The second method is the destruction of the ammo wagon. If enemy artillery fires on your guns (from any distance) and rolls two hits, your artillery must make an activation roll (5+). If it passes the roll, the gun takes one hit as normal and the game continues. If on the other hand, if fails the activation test, the ammo wagon was destroyed and the artillery battery withdraws immediately, taking no hits from the shot. Guns thus withdrawn are removed from play but no élan is lost.

The third, and most anxiety-provoking method is to roll activation separately for each gun at the beginning of the game, noting if the gun succeeded or not. Each gun that failed the activation roll may only use 1d6 to shoot, regardless of range. Those that pass act as normal.

Nationality Special Rules

In each listing below, I add period specific rules that replace the generic rules in the basic game. Players are encouraged to use these rules to add flavor to play. These rules are also broken down into major tactical developments within the nationality. If no rules are noted, then the basic rules apply. The rules apply only to troops of that nationality and not allied troops unless noted otherwise in scenarios.

Austria

1797–1809

- Corps Commander Radius is reduced to 6”.
- Infantry cannot use Attack Column formation.
- Heavy and Line Cavalry reroll one failed to hit roll in combat on the turn they charged.

1809–1814

- Veteran and Seasoned infantry use massed columns tactics; they automatically form Square against cavalry, but are hit on a 4+ by artillery.

Britain

1803–1815

- Only one corps commander can be rated above 4 élan.
- Infantry in Line formation reroll one unsuccessful hit roll when shooting.
- Cavalry that win combat cannot be recalled.
- Light infantry divisions count area terrain as open for movement purposes; only one such division can be had, starting in 1809.

France

1797–1803

- Only one corps commander can be rated above 3 élan.
- Infantry cannot move in the turn they form Line formation.
- Cavalry receive no charge bonus against enemy cavalry.

1805–1809

- Corps Commander Range increases to 12”.
- Charging non-Conscript infantry in Attack Column add a charge bonus of +2d6 (instead of +1d6) the first time they charge.
- Cavalry reroll one unsuccessful hit roll in combat, cumulative with similar bonuses.

1810–1812

- If in Spain, half of all units are downgraded to Conscript.

- If on the retreat from Moscow, only one guard cavalry division can be mounted; all other troops downgraded one type.

1813–1814

- Only one corps commander can be rated above 3 élan.
- Infantry cannot use Line formation.
- Cavalry receive no charge bonus.
- Artillery must reroll one successful hit beyond canister range.

1815

- Corps commander radius is reduced to 6”.

Prussia

1798–1809

- Corps commander radius reduced to 6”.
- Infantry cannot use Attack Column formation.
- Guard infantry and cavalry reroll one unsuccessful to hit roll.

1812-1815

- Conscript infantry or cavalry can’t move in the turn they change formation.
- Conscripts activate on a 4+; unless shooting or combat, which is still 5+.

Russia

1798–1806

- No corps commander can be rated above 3 élan.
- Corp commander radius is reduced to 6”.
- Infantry ignore one hit received from infantry shooting in their first engagement .
- infantry cannot use Attack Column formation.
- Cavalry can only charge in Line formation.

1807–1812

- Infantry ignore one hit received from any shooting in the first engagement.
- Artillery fire that rolls double 6s inflict 2 hits on units beyond canister range.
- Cavalry and infantry receive no charge bonus.

1813–1814

- Cavalry receive no charge bonus against enemy cavalry.

Spain

1808–1813

- No corps commander can be rated above 3 élan.
- Command radius is 6”.
- Infantry cannot use Attack Column formation and cannot move in the turn they form Line from March Order.
- Cavalry receive no charge bonus.

Fall of the Great Redoubt by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 246: *Borodino 1812*

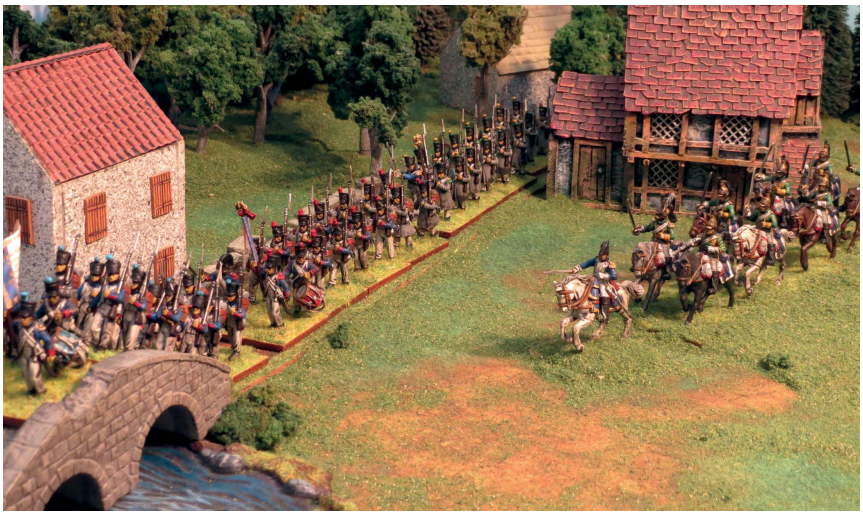
Massive Numbers of Models

We all know there are large numbers of old grognards out there with thousands of miniatures. Their first complaint about Absolute Emperor is that there aren’t enough miniatures on the table (there are, but we’ll leave that right there). I understand you want to play with all your toys. Good! This rule is for you. Double the number of bases for each division. Done! However, when you increase thusly, you keep the aspect ratio of troops for Line, Attack Column and March Order. A unit with eight bases in Line would be four wide and two deep, while in Attack Column would still need to be two wide to maintain the same ratio of brigades able to shoot or fight.

While this is perfectly acceptable as far as geometry and math are concern, it loses something aesthetically. This rule is strictly an alternative and in no way lends to better game play. Just maintain 6” (160mm) frontage for infantry units in Line, 8” (200mm) frontage for cavalry units in Line, and (50mm) for artillery batteries, get the troops on the table, and crack on.

Partial Divisions

At the end of long campaigns, or in instances where only portions of a division are given assignments away from the main body of a corps, depleted divisions may be appropriate. One can, using the basic rules, simply degrade a division to the next lowest troop quality level—i.e. from Seasoned to Conscript quality—which is recommended for scenarios on the retreat from Moscow. Or, a player may opt to use half as many stands in a division with half as many hit points. In many instances, reduced division size makes more sense, because the fighting quality of the troops wasn’t degraded through starvation or the overabundance of recruits; rather it was reduced because of operational assignments. Unlike detachments, these partial divisions operate as normal divisions with half as many attacks, hit points, etc.



A French corps on the move in 1807 trying to catch up to the wily Spanish guerrillas.

Scaling Down

Some gamers prefer a different scale of game than the default used in Absolute Emperor, and this is fine really. There are many systems out there,

because there are so many different gamer preferences. However, for those who like our mechanics but miss the fiddling of the lower echelons, these alternative rules are for you.

- All divisions remain exactly the same in terms of size (four bases for me) and all interaction zones remain 4” to the front and 1” to all flanks and rear. The game looks exactly the same on the table accept that divisions are now called battalions and batteries are brigade level batteries.
- Infantry now have the options of deploying skirmishers to their front. A skirmish line would be four figures on two bases (I use shallower bases) deployed up to 2” in front of the main body of the battalion. When being shot by infantry or dismounted cavalry, wounds are taken from the skirmishers. Each skirmisher base is equivalent to a free wound the parent unit can ignore. When shooting from a unit with deployed skirmishers, only the skirmishing bases can fire, with 1d6 total. So, two skirmisher units firing at each other would be 1d6 each. All skirmisher shooting hits on a 5+ regardless of parent unit quality. If charged, skirmishers are simply removed from the game. Skirmishers cannot be hit by artillery unless in canister range, and if in canister range, the parent unit cannot be hit while skirmishers are out front. The parent unit can be shot at effective range as if the skirmishers were not there. Any volley fire must be directed at the skirmisher unit if the skirmishers intervene in the line of fire.
- Cavalry may shoot and dismount. Cavalry at this scale can shoot their carbines at a rate of 1d6 if mounted and 2d6 if dismounted. Two mounted bases become one base when dismounted. Once dismounted, they act as an infantry unit of two bases with four wounds total. Mounting and dismounting takes a single Movement Phase. When changing from mounted/dismounted, any wounds received remain the same.
- Artillery now have a firing arc of forty-five degrees. Pivot is still free in the Movement Phase, but at this level with twelve rather than fifty guns, batteries can manhandle and track enemy units as they move across their front. Otherwise, artillery is treated exactly the same as in the main game.

- Overall commanders are now division commanders, and corps commanders are now brigade commanders. Therefore, when looking at orders of battles, consider number of battalions in each brigade, rather than overall number of troops as in the main game. Many of the original sources will both aid and confuse this quest, as they often refer to the number of battalions sent in to do a job, but rarely do they tell what brigade they are from. In reality, you may have to simply assign brigade commanders to fit the number of battalions listed in the sources. So, a good rule of thumb is to assign one battalion as one pip on the élan die. Therefore, no brigade commander can handle more than six battalions.

Secret Deployment

All corps that are deployed behind BUA, hills, woods, or other corps may instead be marked with deployment tabs. Simply place the CC's order tab face down in the location on the table where they would be deployed. If an enemy unit comes within a clear line of sight (18"), or the corps is activated, the units are placed on the table in place of the corresponding orders tab; the CC is placed exactly where the tab is located. Once the units are deployed, they may act as normal according to its orders.

Smoke and Fire

When artillery fires into a town or village, it is possible for fire to break out. The same when infantry are engaging in shootings attacks with each other in a wooded area. When either of these instances occurs, and the owning player rolls two 1s on the hit dice in a single Shooting Phase, a fire starts. All units within the building or wood that has been set on fire must, withdraw in the next Movement Phase—even if in combat. That wood or BUA is now considered impassible, and all shooting within an 8" radius of its center is reduce to 1d6 total as the air is obscured by smoke.

Very Large Divisions

There are historical instances where some divisions were unusually large for whatever purposes. The Imperial Guard come to mind as an example. While acting independently in some battles, such as Waterloo, most often the Grenadiers and Chasseurs of the Guard acted in concert together; this

body operating as a unified division would be larger than most. There are other examples throughout the period, but extra-large divisions were not the norm, nor should they be in your games. However, if you want to portray a large division in this way, use six instead of four bases and give it 12 wounds instead of 8. Such a division in Attack Column is formed of two bases wide and three deep, and Line formation four bases wide, two deep on the flanks.

Tournament and Casual Play

Army Building Engine

For developing non-historical scenarios, pickup, or competitive games, players can use the following guidelines to ensure the games are reasonably enjoyable for both players.

The British and Allied army at Waterloo.

Equal Sides

To play this type of ahistorical game, players agree on a points total and cannot exceed that total. A player begins by selecting and paying for a Corps Commander. No corps can contain more units that the commander has élan, so if higher points totals are agreed upon, additional corps will need to be built. If more than one corps, players receive an army commander model. Here is a breakdown of costs of each type of unit:

Unit Type (Division)	French	Austrian	Russian	British	Prussian
Conscript Infantry	10 points	8 points	10 points	10 points	8 points
Seasoned Infantry	15 points	12 points	12 points	15 points	16 points
Veteran Infantry	20 points	16 points	16 points	20 points	24 points
Elite Infantry	30 points	N/A	25 points	30 points	N/A
Conscript Light Cavalry	16 points	16 points	12 points	16 points	12 points
Seasoned Light Cavalry	24 points	24 points	24 points	24 points	26 points
Veteran Light Cavalry	32 points	32 points	32 points	32 points	34 points
Conscript Line Cavalry	24 points	N/A	24 points	24 points	20 points
Seasoned Line Cavalry	32 points	32 points	32 points	32 points	32 points
Veteran Line Cavalry	40 points	40 points	N/A	40 points	N/A
Conscript Heavy Cavalry	32 points	N/A	32 points	N/A	N/A
Seasoned Heavy Cavalry	40 points	32 points	40 points	32 points	40 points
Veteran Heavy Cavalry	48 points	40 points	48 points	48 points	N/A
Lancer Cavalry	30 points	30 points	30 points	N/A	34 points
Elite Cavalry	55 points	55 points	N/A	60 points	N/A
Field Artillery	9 points	6 points	6 points	18 points	12 points
Horse Artillery	12 points	16 points	24 points	9 points	16 points
Corps Commander*	3–6	2–3	2–4	3–5	2–4
*Corps commander numbers represent the available élan that can be allocated. Each élan point costs 5 points.					

- Minor German states use French points until 1813, then they use Prussian points.
- Spanish and Ottoman armies use the Russian points system, but they can only deploy a single Generalissimo that counts as the Commander and the sole corps commander for the entire army.

Example Corps at 100 points

French CC(4) 20 points + one Seasoned infantry divisions 15 points + one Veteran infantry division 20 points + one Seasoned Line Cavalry division 32 points + one field artillery battery 9 points = 96 points

Play What You've Got

If you have more of one nationality than another, you can play this type of game by adding defensible terrain to the side with the smaller army. Just assume that a hill or town is equal to a division. The side with the fewer troops will always be the defender and gets to assign the sides of the table and set up first. The side with the larger army sets up second and goes first on the first turn, regardless of élan.

One of the finest ways to play any game is to get your shiny new regiments on the table as fast as possible. Or, if an old timer, to dust off

those old miniatures you painted in the ‘70s and give them new life. Either way, or both actually, just getting units on the table and playing without creating a historical scenario or counting points allows players to laugh, roll dice and have a pint.

Map Generation for Non-Scenario Play

We suggest that players or tournament organizers preset terrain that is both functional for gaming and esthetically pleasing. The terrain should represent the time period covered by the rules. Hills, villages, roads and crop fields are typical of the landscape.

The British Secure the Cerro de Medellin by Graham Turner © Osprey Publishing Ltd.
Taken from Campaign 253: *Talavera 1809*

If players prefer a random generator, this is a quick and painless way to generate a random playing field for your armies (assuming a 4’ x 6’ table). First each player rolls 1d6. The combined number is the total number of features to be placed on the table.

- If both rolled even numbers, half of the features must be some form of hills.
- If both rolled odd numbers, half of the features must be BUA.
- Otherwise, half of the features must be woods.

The table can never have more than 50% cover of any type. A terrain piece is considered 6” of Linear or 6” in diameter (or square) for area terrain and cover.

Players distribute terrain of their own choosing, with the conditions above in mind, taking turns (roll off again to determine who will go first) placing terrain as desired until all terrain has been placed. Players cannot place terrain in such a way as to be senseless—no fields in rivers, no forest on BUA, etc. Initially each piece is set 6” or more from another terrain piece. When they can’t, terrain can overlap in a logical way.

If one terrain piece overlaps or overlays another terrain piece, the benefits of the most advantageous are used for combat and shooting purposes. After all terrain is placed, players roll off to determine who gets which side of the table. Winner chooses.

Scenarios

In this section we have included three learning scenarios and three historical scenarios. The scenario maps, below, give the general location where you should set up your armies. Players are also encouraged to alter scenarios in any way that allows for increased enjoyment.

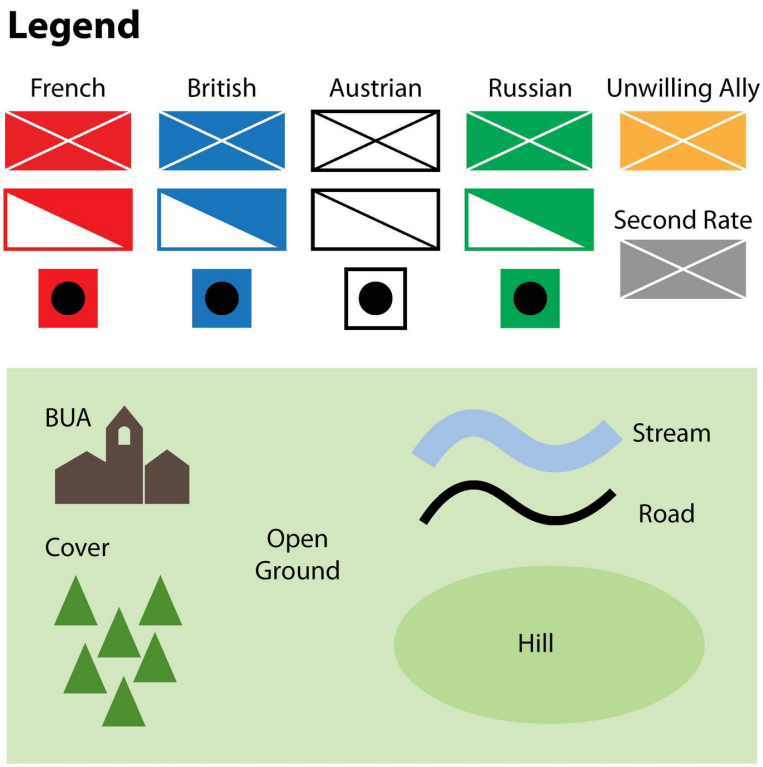
The farmhouse of La Haye St. under attack from all sides. The British will hold or die in place.

The Orders of Battle

Each scenario gives you the order of battle. This translates to how many units of what type are under which corps commander, and their relative position on the battlefield. It is up to the player to place the divisions and batteries within the general area according to their own desired dispositions. An example is shown below.

Corps Commander (élan)

- Number, type, and quality of divisions under the CC.



Scenario Map Legend

Battle of Bumville

First Battle of Bumville

In this scenario, the French (blue) are on a hill 18" away from the town of Bumville. One division of Allied infantry is Deployed in the town, while a second division is just to the left of town behind a wood. The French must occupy the town by turn 8.

France

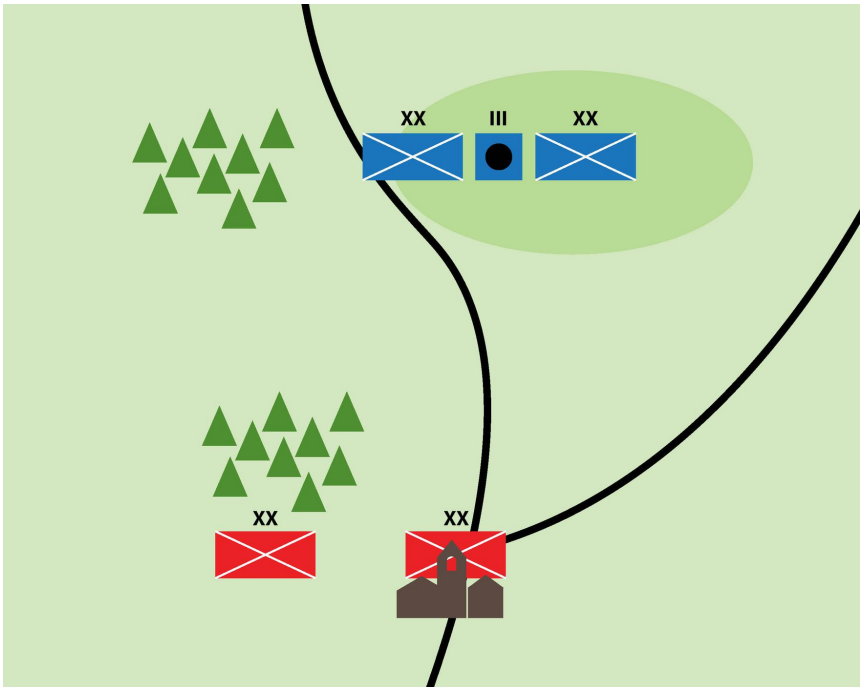
Corps Commander (4)

- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery

Allied

Corps Commander (3)

- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Division



Scenario One: First Battle of Bumville

Second Battle of Bumville

Here at the second battle of Bumville, the French (blue) are on a hill 18" away. They have brought up a division of Seasoned Line Cavalry. One division of Allied infantry is Deployed in the town, while a second and third division are just to the left and right of town. The Allies have brought a Seasoned Light Cavalry division and an artillery battery forward to support the defense. The French must occupy the town by turn 15.

France

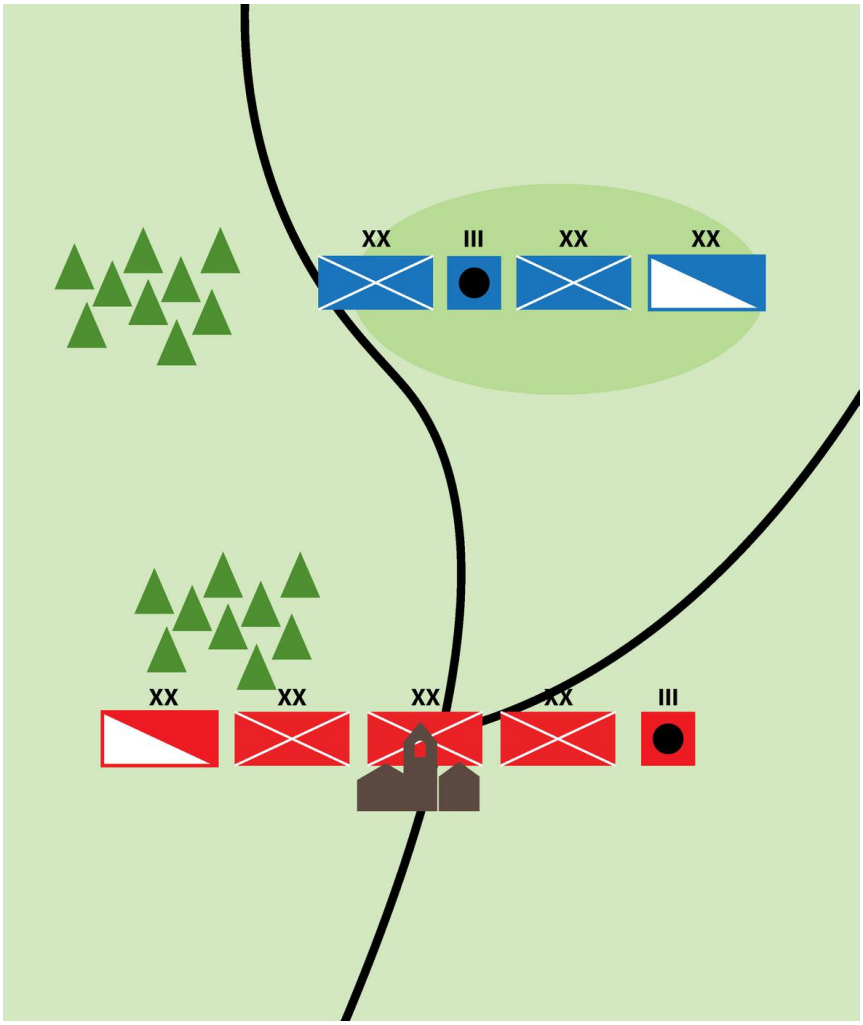
Corps Commander (4)

- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Line Cavalry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery

Allied

Corps Commander (3)

- 3 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Light Cavalry division
- 1 x Artillery Battery



Scenario Two: Second Battle of Bumville

Third Battle of Bumville

In the final battle of Bumville, the French (blue) are on a hill 18” away; they have brought up a second division of Seasoned Line Cavalry and a grand battery. Three divisions of Allied infantry and one division of unwilling allies try to defend the town, aided by a Seasoned Light Cavalry division and an artillery battery. The French must occupy the town by turn 15.

France

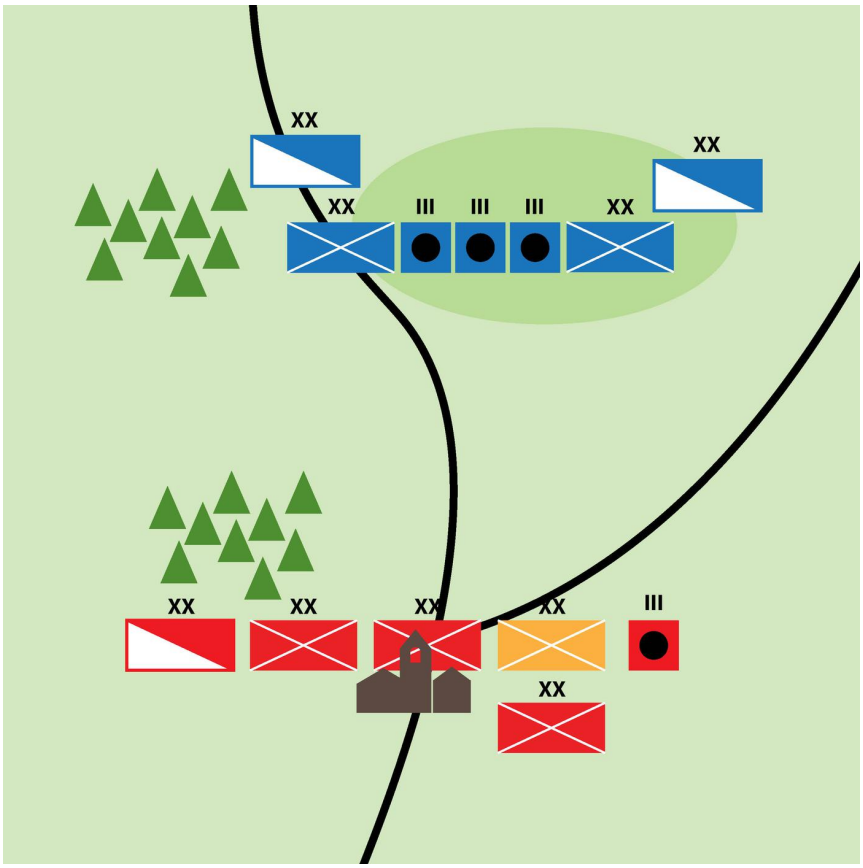
Corps Commander (4)

- 2 x Veteran Infantry Division
- 2 x Seasoned Line Cavalry Division
- 3 x Artillery Battery

Allied

Corps Commander (2)

- 3 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 1 x Conscript Infantry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Light Cavalry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery



Scenario Three: Third Battle of Bumville

Eylau

It is February 8, 1807 and there is snow on the ground, snow in the air, and determination on the face of Napoleon Bonaparte, to finish off the winter campaign by crushing the only remaining threat in Prussia: the Russian army under Benningsen. Having crushed the Prussian army the previous year, subdued all but a handful of Prussian strongpoints, and maneuvered the Russian army back towards Russia, Napoleon is determined now to break the Russian army here at a little town called Eylau. The Russians,

however, are not the same inflexible army Napoleon faced at Austerlitz. This is the new Russian army, that has begun remodeling itself along French lines., though it still isn't the flexible fighting force it will soon become.

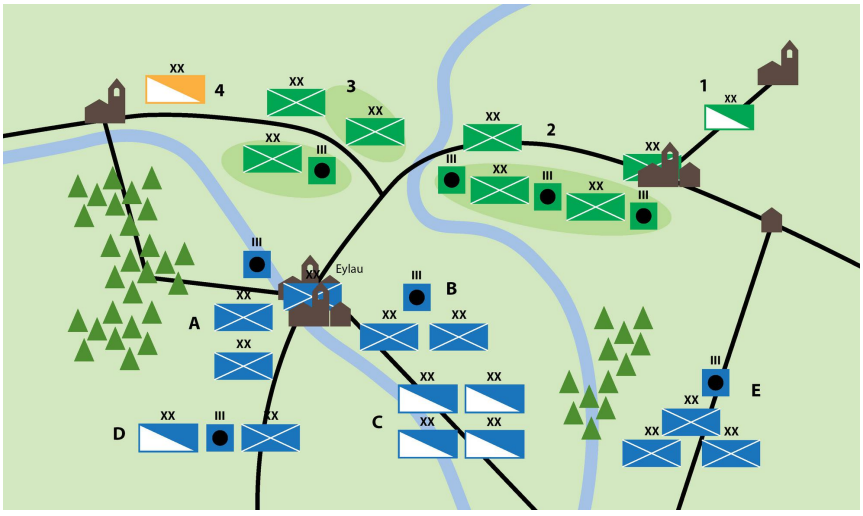
What makes this battle significant is that, for the first time, the French did not win a decisive, overwhelming victory. The Russian army took a beating and withdrew from the field, but the French suffered in equal measure. After Eylau, the French were no longer seen as unstoppable; the rest of the world gained hope.

The second day of Eylau sees the town firmly in control of the French. The Russians occupy the high ground just outside of town.

All Russians begin the game with Defend orders.

Soult and Augereau set up their cannon 18" from the nearest Russian artillery battery. All French infantry corps are on Hold orders: two turns for Soult and Augereau, three turns for Davout. The Guard and the Cavalry Reserve are on Defend orders. Davout begins the game in March Order along the road with artillery first, then one division after the other strung out along the road.

The French must take and hold the bridge for two turns to claim victory, with a time limit of twenty turns. The Russians win by denying the French victory conditions.



Battle of Eylau Scenario Map

France: Napoleon

A. Soult (4) (IV Corps)

- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Veteran Infantry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery

B. Augereau (4) (I Corps)

- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Artillery Battery

C. Murat (5) (Cavalry Reserve)

- 2 x Seasoned Heavy Cavalry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Line Cavalry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Light Cavalry Division

D. Imperial Guard

- 1 x Elite Infantry Division
- 1 x Guard Cavalry Division

E. Davout (4) (III Corps)

- 1 x Seasoned Infantry Divisions
- 2 x Veteran Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Artillery Battery

Russia: Benningsen

1. Tolstoi (3) (Left Wing)

- 1 x Veteran Infantry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Line Cavalry
- 1 x Artillery Battery

2. Sacken, Dokhturov, and Kamensky (Center)

- 3rd Division 1 x Veteran Infantry Division, 1 x Artillery Battery
- 4th division 1 x Seasoned Infantry Division, 1 x Artillery Battery
- 7th division 1 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 14th division 1 x Conscript Infantry Division

3. Essen (Right Wing)

- 5th division 1 x Veteran Infantry Divisions
- 8th division 2 x Seasoned Infantry Division, 1 x Artillery Battery

4. Tuckhov (Cossacks)

- Cossacks 1 x Conscript Light Cavalry Division

Special Scenario Rules

Woods

- The woods are impassible, frozen, swamplands and dense scrub forests.

Snow

- It threatens to snow. At the beginning of each turn the player with the initiative rolls 1d6. On a roll of 4+, it is snowing, and visibility is reduced to 12”. On a roll of 6, visibility is reduced to 4”. If it snows, any French infantry that are forward of French artillery batteries are hit by the French artillery rolling a 1.

Benningsen

- Benningsen is his own corps commander. Since the Russian army is still in reform, there are no reliable “corps” commander subordinates upon which he can rely. He has Tolstoi on his left acting as a separate corps, but all other divisions and batteries are under Benningsen’s direct control.
- His movement rate per turn is 12”.
- In order to issue an order to any division, he must first move to within command radius (8”) during the Movement Phase.
- Once an order has been given to a division, it must continue to obey that order until another has been issued.
- Benningsen does not deplete élan per order issued as normal; rather he uses one élan per turn to issue any number of orders to units within his command span. So, for example, If Benningsen issues orders on turn two, he had best issue orders to many units, because his élan just dropped by one. He will still gain and lose élan through combat actions as normal.

Austrian reserves debouche from the wood line.

Cossacks

- If the Cossack division is activated through a change of orders, it must roll 1d6 to interpret the orders. If the order is to attack, it will be ignored on a roll of 1 or 2. If the order is to move to a new defensive location, it will be ignored on a roll of 1. The élan is still used, even if the order is ignored.

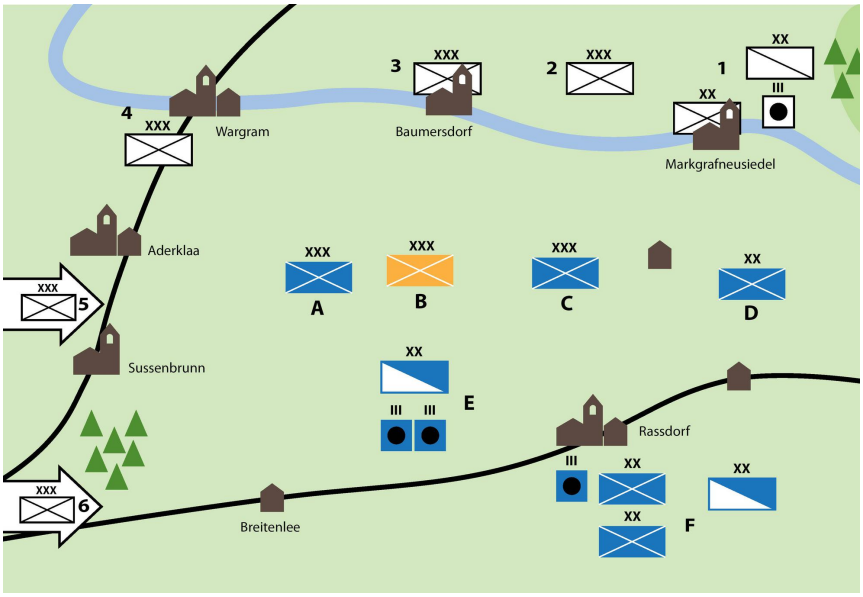
Wagram

In 1809 Napoleon was in possession of Vienna, but Archduke Charles and the Austrian army were positioned north of the Danube. In order for the French to claim victory, the Austrian army had to be eliminated. After some maneuvering and fortification of Lobau Island, the French managed to get across the river on July 5th, pushing the Austrian advanced guard back in the process. Fighting continued until after dark, but the French managed to get the entire Grande Armee across the river and into position around the village of Rassdorf.

This scenario represents the action on the second day, with MacDonald's Army of Italy replacing the Saxon 9th Corps.

Nearest opposing units begin 18" apart.

The game ends at nightfall on turn 13.



Battle of Wagram Scenario Map

France: Napoleon

A. Masséna (4) (IV Corps)

- 1 x Veteran Infantry Division
- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Seasoned Light Cavalry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery

B. MacDonald (4) (Army of Italy)

- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Conscript Infantry Division

C. Oudinot (4) (II Corps)

- 2 x Veteran Infantry Divisions
- 4 x Seasoned Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Artillery Battery

D. Davout (4) (III Corps)

- 3 x Veteran Infantry Divisions
- 3 x Seasoned Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Seasoned Line Cavalry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Light Cavalry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery

E. Bessières (3) (Cavalry Reserves)

- 1 x Veteran Heavy Cavalry Division (large division of 6 elements)

F. The Imperial Guard
- 2 x Elite Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Elite Cavalry Division
- 2 x Artillery Battery

Austria: Charles

1. von Rosenberg (4) (IV Corps & Advanced Guard)
- 3 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Line Cavalry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery

2. von Bellegarde (3) (I Corps)
- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery

3. von Hohenzollern (3) (II Corps)
- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 1 x Conscript Infantry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery

4. Kollowrat (3) (III Corps)
- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 1 x Conscript Infantry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery

5. Lietchenstein (4) (Reserves Corps, Flank March 5)
- 2 x Veteran Infantry Division
- 1 x Veteran Heavy Cavalry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Line Cavalry Division

6. Klenau (2) (VI Corps, Flank March 6)
- 3 x Conscript Infantry Divisions

Special Scenario Rules

Rassbach Stream
- The Rassbach stream presents minimal difficultly, except between Wagram and Baumerdorf; units are delayed one turn

of movement in difficult ground between those towns, but once in the stream it adds no further delay.

French Divisions in Attack Column move passed an abandoned village.

Great Square

- To represent the great square of MacDonald, the French player can place two divisions together, one behind the other with bases touching. It has 16 wounds, but can be hit by artillery on 3+.

French Imperial Guard

- In order for the French player to activate each of the Imperial Guard units, he must roll 6+ to activate until after turn nine, then they activate on 4+; they must be activated individually and assigned to French corps still on the battlefield.

Austrian Flank Attack

- Two Austrian corps are moving into position for a flank attack on the French left (the number indicates the earliest turn they can arrive). To bring an Austrian flanking corps onto the board, the Austrian player needs to roll 4+.

Waterloo

Napoleon and Wellington face off at last, as the culmination of the 100 Days in 1815. Napoleon, confident in Grouchy's ability to keep the Prussians from joining the battle, delays the attack until the ground is dry; Wellington, hoping the Prussians will arrive before his forces are overrun, plans a defensive battle using reverse slopes to keep most of his men safe from the French cannons.

The French may set up as close as 12" to Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte. Reille and D'Erlon are on Attack orders, Lobau is on Hold 3 orders, all others are on Defend orders.

All British commands are on Defend orders.

The French must gain a victory before the Prussians enter the board at the end of turn 12 or they automatically lose.

France: Napoleon

A. Reille (3) (II Corps)

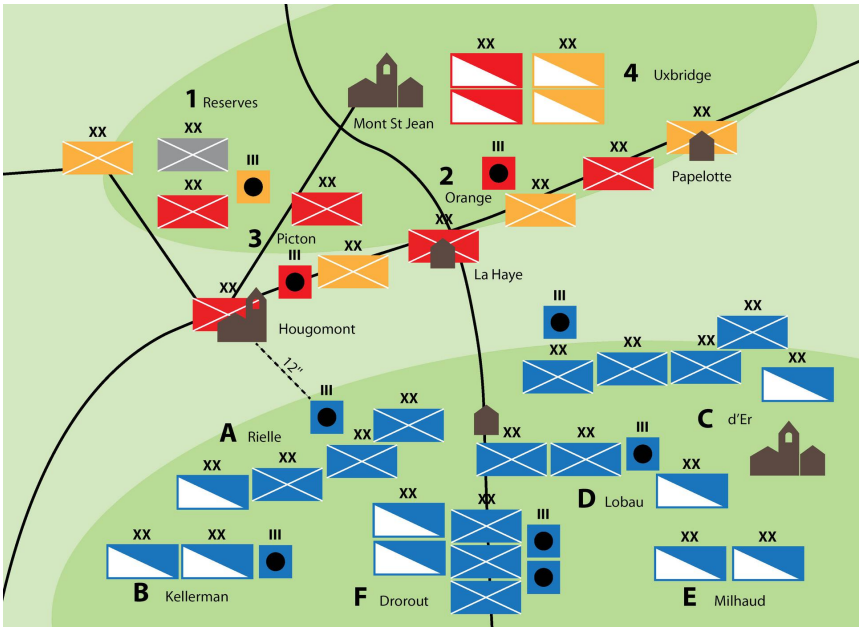
- 3 x Seasoned Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Artillery Battery

B. Kellermann (3) (III Cavalry Reserve)

- 2 x Seasoned Line Cavalry Divisions
- 1 x Horse Artillery Battery

C. d'Erlon(3) (I Corps)

- 4 x Seasoned Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Artillery Battery



Battle of Waterloo Scenario Map

D. Lobau (3) (VI Corps)

- 2 x Seasoned Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Artillery Battery

E. Milhaud (3) (IV Cavalry Reserves)

- 1 x Seasoned Heavy Cavalry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Line Cavalry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Light Cavalry Division

F. Drouot (4) (The Imperial Guard)

- 2 x Elite Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Elite Cavalry Division (large 6 bases)
- 1 x Artillery Battery

Allied: Wellington

1. Allied Reserves (Brunswick and Dutch Divisions, as well as Clinton's Division)

- 1 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 2 x Conscript Infantry Divisions
- 1 x Artillery Battery

2. Orange (2) (I Corps)

- 1 x Elite Infantry Division

- 1 x Veteran Infantry Division
- 2 x Conscript Infantry Division (Nassau and Dutch-Belgian)
- 1 x Artillery Battery

3. Picton (4) (5th and 6th Divisions)
- 1 x Elite Infantry Division
- 1 x Seasoned Infantry Division
- 1 x Conscript Infantry Division (Hannover Landwehr)
- 1 x Artillery Battery

4. Uxbridge (3) (Cavalry Corps)
- 2 x Elite Heavy Cavalry Division
- 2 x Conscript Light Cavalry Division
- 1 x Artillery Battery; see Special Scenario Rules

Special Scenario Rules

Wellington
- The Duke has a move of 18” per turn.
- Any unit in the Allied Reserves or Cavalry Corps Artillery entry can only be moved using an activation roll, and only if within the 12” command span of Wellington at the beginning of the turn. Once the unit receives an order, it must continue under that order until Wellington issues a new order through an activation roll. If a roll is failed, the unit continues under its last received order.

Reverse slope
- The road running from Hougoumont to La Haye Sainte constitutes a crest of sorts. Any allied unit beyond that line is considered using the reverse slope. French artillery outside of canister range firing at such units use only 1d6. Allied artillery cannot fire from a reverse slope position unless enemy are within canister range.

Hougoumont
- The farm acts as a fortress.

Napoleon
- Only Napoleon can activate the Imperial Guard or either cavalry reserve under Milhaud or Kellermann.

- He can only activate the two Guard infantry divisions together. Because he is reluctant to send in the Guard, before turn eight he must roll a 6 for the activation of the infantry. Druout remains with the Guard infantry and acts as the corps commander once activated.
- He can activate the artillery or the cavalry of the Guard separately from the infantry, using a 5+ activation roll. If any Guard are activated without the infantry, they must be assigned to another corps commander; this will increase that commander's élan by one automatically.
- If either cavalry reserve is activated before turn six, it cost that corps commander one élan.

Scenario One Example

Here we will walk through an example of battle from start to finish.

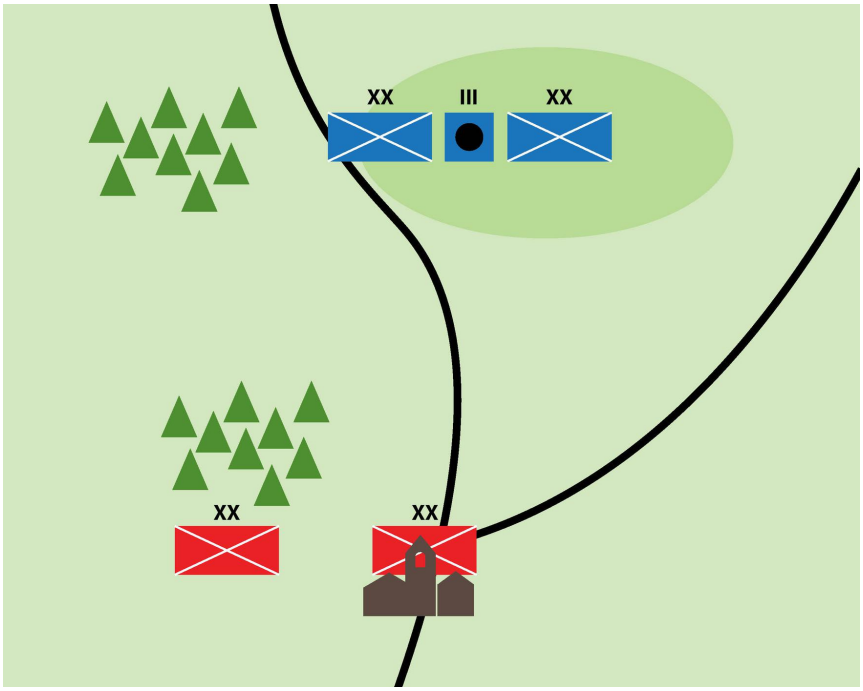
For narrative clarity, we will refer to units by location from left to right as we are looking at them on the map. So the two French infantry units will be called French Division One (closest to the trees) and French Division Two (nearest the stream). Allied Division One is behind the trees, Division Two is in the town. Terms unit and division are interchangeable.

An Austrian Corps consisting of a division of infantry and a division of heavy cavalry moves into position outside of Baumersdorf.

Turn One

As the French have higher élan, the Allied player must move first. The Allied player has opted to deploy his troops under Defend orders and, since

he is out of shooting range and under orders to defend the town, he elects to leave Division Two deployed in the town and moves Division One forward 2” to just behind the woods left of town. As the Corps Commander is located between the divisions, this move is legal even under Defend orders, since both divisions remain in command span. The Allied commander has completed his movement, so the French begin their Movement Phase.



Scenario One Example: Turn 1

The French Commander wastes no time in beginning his advance on the town (being under Attack orders).Knowing his time for victory is short, he sends both divisions in Attack Column formation forward toward the town, leaving a corridor between the divisions so that his artillery can fire on the town. Both divisions move their full 6”, which puts them both at 12” from the town.

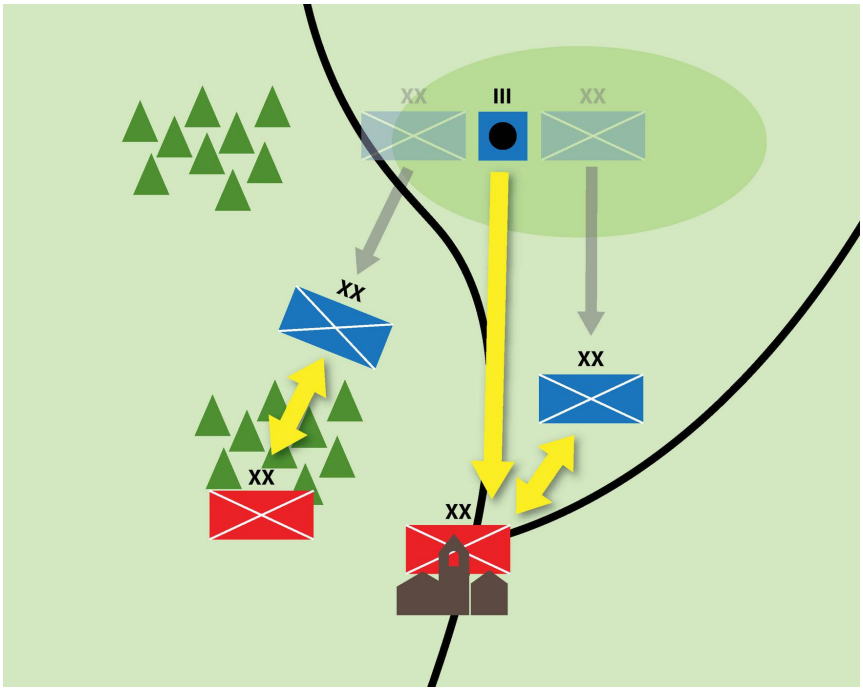
In the Shooting Phase, only the French artillery battery has a shot. At 18” the artillery fires using 2d6, -1d6 for firing into the town. So, the French player only rolls 1d6. His roll is 3, not enough to cause a hit. Since no one is within charge range, the turn ends.

Turn Two

The Allied player once again moves first, since élan remains the same. There is little that can be done, but it seems clear that Division One needs to enter the wood in order to have some effect on the battle in the next turn. Recognizing that a division in Line will take more than two turns to move through the wood, the player changes formation into Attack Column and moves into the wood 4", turning 45 degrees to his right towards the enemy divisions.

Now the French move; having seen the movement of the Allied division, the French player decides to divert one of his divisions towards the woods after changing it to Line formation. This brings French Division One to 4" of Allied Division One, and it halts. The other French division continues in Attack Column to 6" of the town and halts.

In the Shooting Phase, the French player elects to go from our left to right as phase order. Allied unit One fires at French unit One, rolling 2d6 (Attack Column) and the French player rolls 3d6 (Line formation 4d6, -1d6 for shooting into cover). The Allied player scores one hit and the French two. Two hits in the Fire Phase means the Allied unit has been halted and will not be able to charge this turn. Next, the French artillery fires at the town and scores a single hit. So, at the end of the Shooting Phase, Allied unit One is halted.



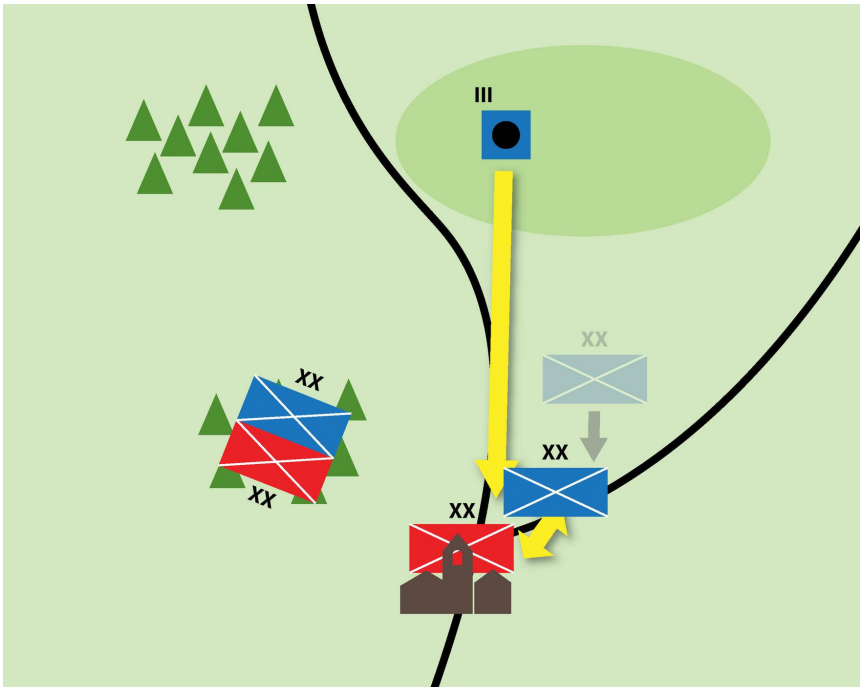
Scenario One Example: Turn 2

Turning next to the Charge Phase, only French unit One is within range to charge and not halted. It charges into the wood to combat the halted Allied unit. As combat in cover hinders both sides equally, there are no minuses to either side. There also is no charge bonus die when Infantry charges into cover. The Allied unit in Attack Column is fighting with two dice only, while the French division is charging in Line formation with four dice total. This looks grim for the allies, but both players inflict only one wound on their opponent; the combat is a tie and the two units remain locked in combat until the Combat Phase of the next turn. At the end of turn two French Division One has two hits, Allied Division One has three hits, and Allied Division Two has one hit.

Turn Three

At the beginning of the turn, all units not in combat would theoretically upgrade status by one level, but allied unit 1 is halted and in combat. The allied commander, moving first, has no actual movement to conduct since one of his divisions is locked in combat and the other is deployed in the town. The French player continues to rely upon shooting into the town in order to keep his artillery battery in play. He changes French unit Two into Line formation and moves to 4" of the town. This makes his firepower 2d6 (4d6 for Line formation, -2d6 for shooting into a BUA). With no other movement on either side, the two players conduct shooting, with the French artillery scoring another hit on Allied Division Two. Allied Division Two shoots with its 2d6 and scores a single hit on French Division Two, but French Division Two misses completely. Allied Division Two has taken two hits total. French Division Two has only one hit but, more importantly, it is not halted, since it received only a single hit in this turn's Shooting Phase. Naturally, French Division Two charges into the town.

Back in the woods left of town, the two units locked in combat roll their combat with Allied unit One rolling 2d6 and scoring no hits, while French Division One rolls 4d6 and scores two resounding hits! This is potentially devastating, as now Allied unit One is exhausted and downgraded to Conscript quality starting in the next turn. This will make defending the wood difficult, as the French will have a decided advantage, hitting on 4+ with 4d6, while Allied unit One now only hit on 5+ with 2d6.



Scenario One Example: Turn 3

Returning to the French charge into Bumville, we find the hard-pressed Allied troops fighting with 2d6, rolling a 5 and a 6! That causes two hits upon French Division Two who, rolling 2d6 in the attack, manages to only score one hit. Thus, both combats are now locked. Allied unit One has five hits, Allied unit Two has three hits. French Division One has two hits, while French Division Two has three hits. Things look very undecided at this point, so let us continue to see what happens next. Take note that all units are becoming exhausted the longer the combat continues.

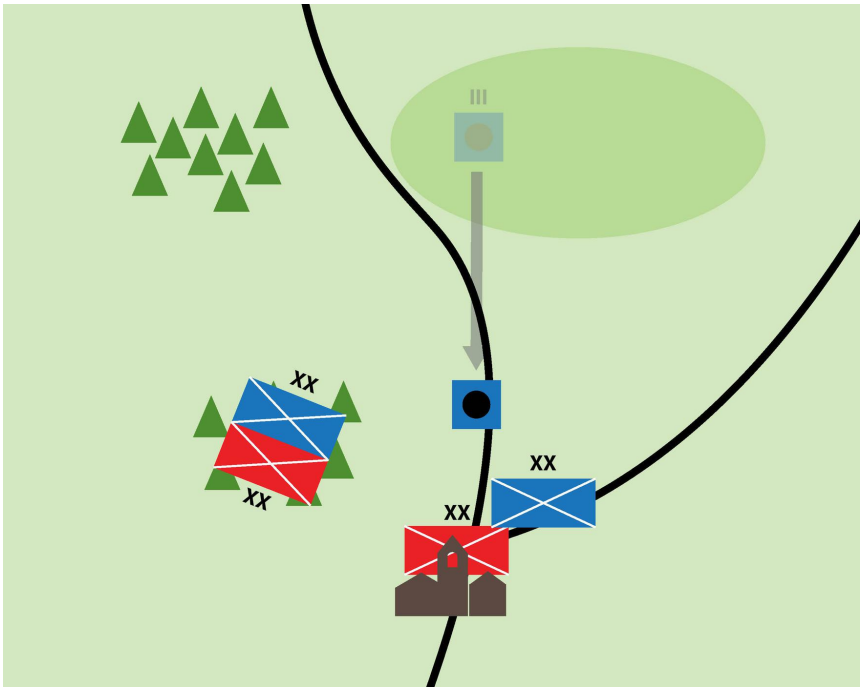
Turn Four

The Movement Phase consists of the French artillery battery limbering and moving down the center of the field in an attempt to take a better position for a shot on either allied unit as necessary.

In the woods, Allied unit One is fighting at a severe disadvantage, being in Attack Column and exhausted, fighting against a unit in Line formation. Therefore, during the Movement Phase, the Allied commander attempts to change Allied unit One to Line formation while in combat. This requires an activation roll of 5+, since the unit has been reduced to Conscript status through casualties. He rolls the die and it's a 2. This just made things much worse, as the unit will become disordered in addition to being exhausted.

The Allied commander resorts to his only real option; he rerolls the activation roll using one of his élan points. The reroll is a success! He rolls a 5, just what is needed, and Allied Division One is now in Line formation.

Since there is no shooting nor charges this turn, combat continues. In the wood, Allied unit One, now rolling 4d6, scores two hits, while French Division One scores one. French Division One is nearing exhaustion while Allied unit One is nearing collapse. In the town, Allied Division Two scores two hits and French Division Two scores none. The tide has turned slightly in favor of the Allies in the town, now that French unit Two has five hits and is exhausted. It is reduced to Conscript, hitting on 5+.



Scenario One Example: Turn 4

Turn Five

It is no surprise that the French artillery has unlimbered facing the town during the Movement Phase, as French Division Two may soon be routed. Moving on to the Combat Phase, it is all over for Allied unit One in the woods, as it receives two hits which takes its total to eight, rendering it combat ineffective, and it is removed from the game. The Allied commander “rolls for the colors” rolling a 6, so no élan changes hands. In

the town, French unit Two can effect only one hit, but receives one additional hit itself, bringing its total to six hits.

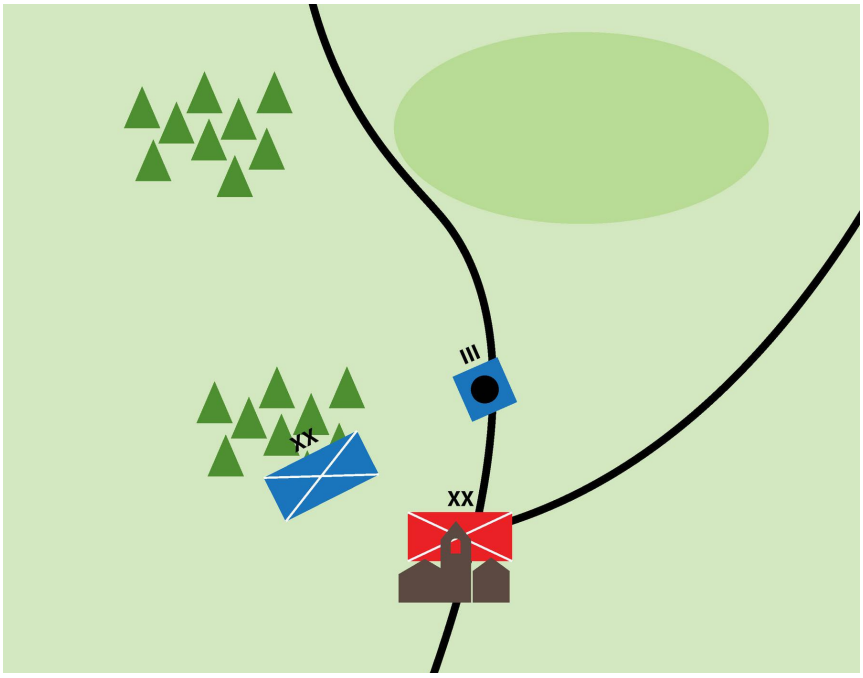
Turn Six

The Allies have no movement, so the French commander moves Division One through the woods after changing into Attack Column. The unit is now 6” from the town. The artillery battery is already in position, as the French commander anticipated the need last turn. As French unit One is out of charge range, the combat in the town between the two units continues. Each rolls 2d6. The exhausted French need to roll 5+ and fail to hit. The Allied unit rolls two hits, giving the French unit Two eight hits total. The French assault on the town fails. The French commander fails to “save the colors” and one élan passes to the Allied commander.

Turn Seven

The French commander changes unit One into Line, then moves out of the woods 2” to halt 4” from the edge of town. With no other movement, the Shooting Phase begins. French unit One rolls 2d6, scoring one hit on a 5, while Allied unit Two roll 2d6, scoring one hit reducing the French to Conscript quality. The artillery fails to hit. The French, not being halted, prepare to charge the town; however, being exhausted, the unit must roll an activation roll. On a roll of 3 the activation fails. Out of excitement the French commander uses an élan point to reroll the activation…and rolls a 2. The French division fails to charge, and it cost the French commander an élan point for his trouble.

Napoleon at Waterloo by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Command 1: *Napoleon Bonaparte*



Scenario One Example: Turn 8

Turn Eight

Jumping past the Movement Phased straight into shooting, the French commander's moment of embarrassment for wasting élan passes as he scores a hit on Allied unit Two during the Shooting Phase. That last hit brings the Allied division's total to six. However, the artillery fails to hit, and the chance of an easy victory through shooting is over. It is desperation time for the French. With no more turns left, the French commander rolls an activation to charge his exhausted infantry into the town. It fails. With only one élan point left, he cannot make a reroll, thus the game ends with the Allied division, exhausted but intact, still holding Bumville at the end of turn eight. A narrow Allied victory is celebrated by both players over a pint, then they reset and play again; but commanding opposite sides.

Appendix

Notes for a Tournament Game Master

Tournaments are, by nature, high stress environments, in which players with equal points levels compete for a prize (money, plaque or handshake). It is critical for you, the GM, to have three essential abilities in order to make a Napoleonic wargame tournament successful.

First is a clear understanding of the rules; how the rulebook is laid out and a willingness to use the rulebook as a guide in making determinations regarding angles and distances. Invariably, most rules questions that players call upon you to make are based upon angles—shooting and charging arcs. A good rule of thumb is to have each player tell you their intentions first, then examine the angles in question. Questions often arise from withdrawals, follow up charges, and BUA combat; this is where your understanding of the rules and the theory behind the rules will prove invaluable. Unlike most Napoleonic wargames, Absolute Emperor is highly abstract in the zone where units meet. For example, a division charging into a BUA appears to still be Attack Column, but this is not what is happening; instead, men are running down streets and alleys, shooting from windows or behind barricades; in short, it is chaos. It is important to consider these abstractions when making a ruling.

The British light division hold against the onslaught of French infantry columns.

Second is to set the terrain and scenario aspects of the games. Will there be preset terrain? What is the objective, if any, beyond the normal victory conditions? What points level will players use? What is the time limit per round? It is important to decide these important aspects prior to the day. My suggestion is that you set the terrain on every table so that is does not advantage one side over the other. You may even consider mirroring terrain as a means of accomplishing terrain neutrality. I also suggest that if there is an objective located in the center of the table—a hill, BUA, or other obvious military type objective—you give clear rules as to what constitutes control of the objective. Games that last over two hours are often wearing on tournament players, as three two-hour rounds means six hours of game play and at least two hours of breaks. That's an eight-hour day, and more than enough to exhaust you as well as the players! With that in mind, and considering space available, point totals for the tournament should be kept reasonable, because you want to have battles fought to conclusion within the given time allotment. Also, remember that the lower the points total, the easier it is for more gamers to have playable armies, so the tournament appeals to a wider range of gamers. I recommend tournaments of no more than 250 points, though if this is a new tournament trying to whip up interest in your area, perhaps as low as 100 points per side should be considered. Also, to speed play, allow players to set up as close as 18" away from each other—this is the maximum effective cannon range, which was typical for the period.

The third, and final, aspect is that of you. Running a tournament is work, but it isn't laborious drudgery. However, you must know your limits. If you are considering becoming a GM for any game, consider your motives. Is it for your passion of the game, or your desire to grow the hobby? Then by all means I encourage you to spread the love. You'll see tremendous rewards from the people who participate, and additional rewards from seeing those who stop by to watch what is happening. Wargaming is contagious through contact, and you will become the carrier by running a tournament. But you must be willing to limit any event you run to your own limits of endurance. No one likes a grumpy GM, and nothing discourages players and spectators more than someone that doesn't seem to enjoy what he is doing.

I consider the best aspect of Absolute Emperor is that it so easily allows for tournament gaming at lower points totals and still presents a beautiful table, where even the most casual observer can work out what is going on.

For potential gamers, the fact that it doesn't require years of collecting, research, and painting in order to produce a single army is going to be the hook to bring them in. Napoleonic wargaming, remember, is the granddaddy of wargaming. If you want spectacle, pomp, and dash, this is where it is in wargaming. If you want that grandeur with a quick, delightful game, then Absolute Emperor is just what the doctor ordered.

The attack and capture of the Petite Rhune, 10 November 1813 by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 266: *Bayonne and Toulouse 1813–14*

A Final Note From the Author

As with all things, I am first most interested in a game that players enjoy. Second, that it imparts a sense of enthusiasm to the casual observer to learn and know more about the period. And last, that it provides reasonable historical results. There are those that will take umbrage with my free license with those things they hold most dear. The exact color of turnback buttons, the number of stitches in the flag's tassels, the number of shots a particular unit could fire in one minute, the time it takes orders to reach the farthest unit in a March Order, the paunch limitations of a hussars uniform, the comparative number of steps per minute between the Old Guard and a Prussian Conscript, the speed of a horse at the trot, and so on and so forth—I've disregarded them all. And to those who adore these details, I do apologize. I know and love all the details like the next man, but for gaming

I like a solid mechanic with period feel more than minutia. However, I always welcome input to help better my game systems, and certainly this rules set is no exception. I encourage people to play many different sets of rules and modify any of them to better fit their own sensibilities of what constitutes historical accuracy. Remember, all good miniature game systems began as house rules that incorporated ideas from preceding systems. My friends and I have certainly done our share of it ourselves. I hope you enjoy our effort here and good gaming!

Attack BUA	Attack BUA	Attack BUA	Attack BUA
Attack Hill	Attack Hill	Attack Hill	Attack Hill
Flank Left	Flank Right	Attack Intersection	Attack Intersection
Defend Hill	Defend Hill	Defend Hill	Defend Hill
Defend BUA	Defend BUA	Defend BUA	Defend Intersection
Defend Intersection	Defend Intersection	Hold 2	Hold 2
Hold 3	Hold 3	Hold 4	Hold 4

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Boyd Bruce has been a librarian, a soldier, a father, and a wargamer. Relying upon his history degree, his love of books, his years of service, and a passion for wargaming, he has made the transition from participant to author with *Absolute Emperor*. Playing all types of tabletop wargaming, Boyd's main gaming interest will always be historical, and Napoleonic gaming holding a favorite place in his heart.

ILLUSTRATOR

Mark Stacey was born in Manchester, UK, in 1964 and has been a freelance illustrator since 1987. He has a lifelong interest in all periods of history, particularly military history, and has specialized in this area throughout his career. He now lives and works in Cornwall.

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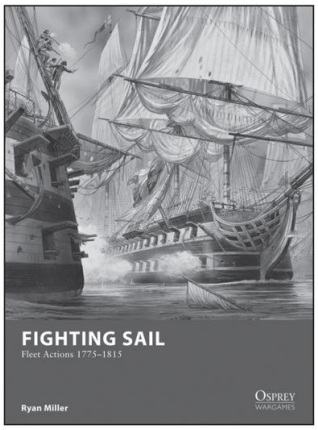

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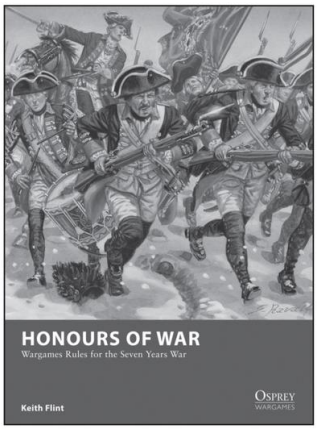

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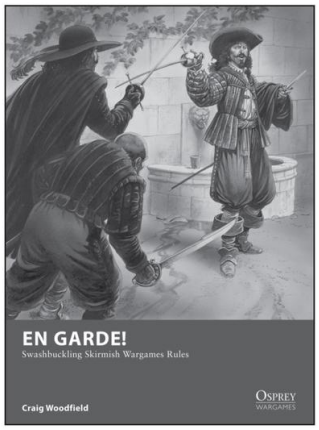

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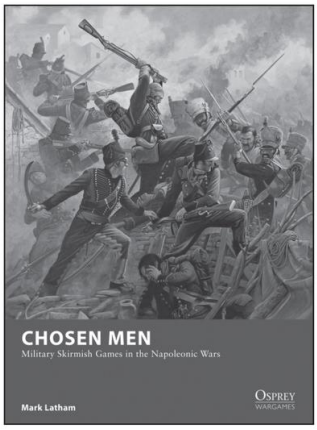

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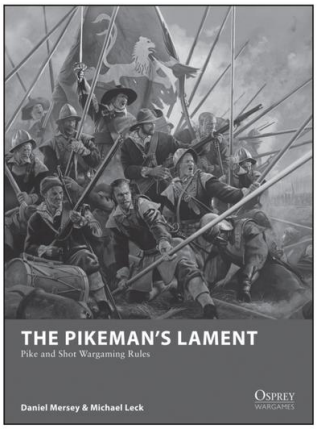

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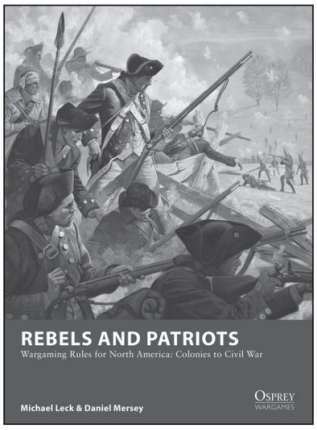

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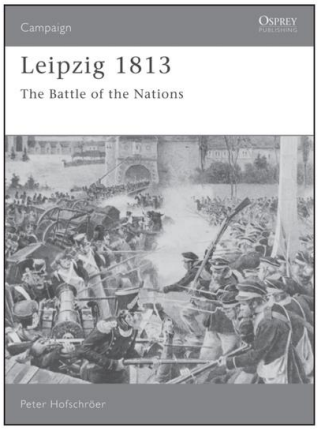

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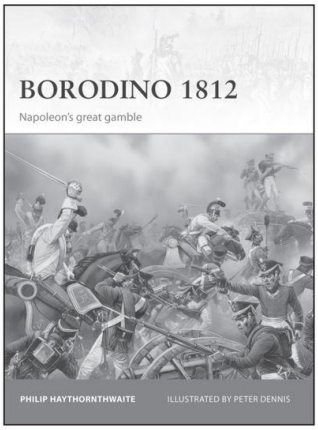

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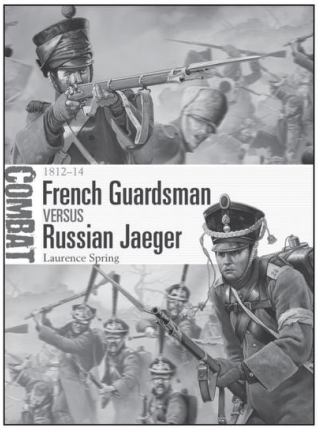

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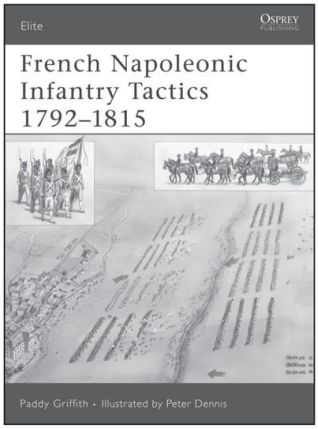

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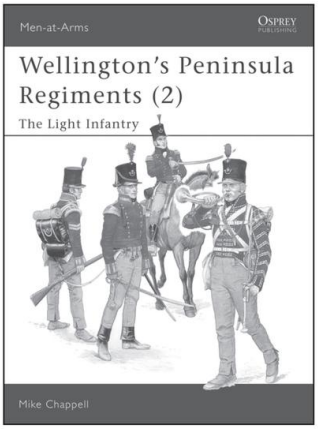

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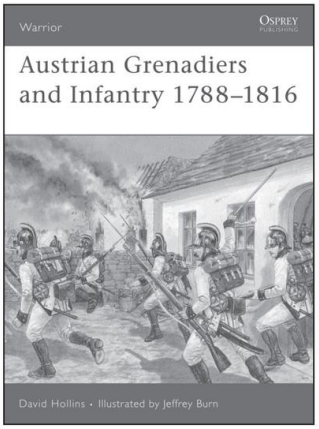

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OSPREY GAMES
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
Kemp House, Chawley Park, Cumnor Hill, Oxford OX2 9PH, UK
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1385 Broadway, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10018, USA
E-mail: **info@ospreygames.co.uk**
www.ospreygames.co.uk

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First published in Great Britain in 2021

This electronic edition published in 2021 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
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A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

PB ISBN: 9781472843654
eBook ISBN: 9781472843661
ePDF ISBN: 9781472843678
XML ISBN: 9781472843685

Typeset by PDQ Digital Media Solutions, Bungay, UK

Osprey Games supports the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

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Acknowledgements

The following contributors made this rule set possible: John Holmes, Charlie Croft, Jim Gilliam, Richard Keck, Rufus DeVane, Rick Parish, Kai DeVane, and all the HMGS South play testers.

Photographs

All photographs from the author's collection.